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QUARRYTOWN

Quarrytown

BY

DOUGLAS DOBBINS



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PREFACE

MORE than ten years ago, the author began to write the book which he is now able to offer to the public. The first edition was very unsatisfactory, at least to one mind, and that mind was the only one interested. So it was written and re-written. It is no exaggeration to say that each chapter has been written and re-written twenty times. At last, it has reached our standard; may it reach yours.

When we first began to write, the dedication said: "To our precious little daughter, Jean, aged one-half year!" How time flies, and how the hopes of life are deferred! And yet, the book has gained by this long period of seasoning. Perhaps the greatest consolation in this life of ours is this: That what is lost in time and patience and labor is gained in quality, is gained in real worth. God grant it!

When we first began to write, the Anti-Saloon League had just begun to bestir itself like a newly-awakened lion. This book takes a kodak view of things before that peerless organization had begun to bear fruit. Now in Indiana and elsewhere, the law has been so changed, so strengthened, that the good people of Quarrytown would experience far less trouble in suppressing the troublesome O'Leary and his ilk.

The book is written from the standpoint of the editor, Mr. Howe, and not from the standpoint of the valiant, old, uncompromising committee, of which Mr. Balk and Uncle Tommy McIntosh are the head. This was done for obvious purposes. Nearly all of the anti-saloon struggles are based upon happenings in the actual, but the love story is pure fiction.

THE AUTHOR.

Franklin, Indiana, November 10, 1913.

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CHAPTER I.

THOUGH the Bourbon Argus proudly announced at the head of its editorial page that it was the official organ of its party in Blackwood county, it was, for all that, but an ordinary weekly country newspaper. To be sure, it had a fairly large circulation in Quarrytown though it was published at the county seat ten miles away.

And yet, though it may have been an "organ," and entitled to all the honor and credit that may be involved in that designation, it was **not** usually filled with matter calculated to awaken a deep and absorbing interest among the gossips and newsmongers of the village. Its editor was an old-line politician who had grown gray chewing tobacco and "cussin'" the other fellows, and who in his earlier days had fought one of the sternest battles ever known with that sublime problem of how to subsist. Latterly, however, times had become easier. He had grown more and more conservative as the years flew by, until he had become positively averse to any kind of excitement, not only in politics, but in news as well. And it may be said that if anything did appear in the columns of the Argus that stirred up the people and made them think and act out of the ordinary rut, it was surely not the editor's fault.

But one week the contents of the Argus lifted the public interest at Quarrytown above the high water mark. The unexpected was about to happen. An announcement appeared in the Argus in cold type. One Patrick O'Leary therein notified all parties concerned that he would, on the first Monday in Septem-

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ber then and there approaching, apply for a license to retail intoxicating liquors within the sacred precincts of Quarrytown.

The citizens read the notice in amazement. Quarrytown had a record on the liquor question of which the large majority of the citizens was proud. The storm at last broke. The village aroused itself as one man and shook off its lethargy. The pulpits thundered forth denunciation after denunciation until the last sleeper could no longer rest in peace. Special services were held in all the churches; the laity resolved, the preachers preached and Uncle Tommy McIntosh and his prayer-meeting associates did the praying. Even the ladies helped to arouse many of the quiet, non-committal souls who preferred not to take sides on such an ease-destroying controversy.

Here, also, was Ezra H. Howe's opportunity for seeking the jack-o' lantern of appreciation. Mr. Howe was editor and proprietor of the local paper published at Quarrytown, and which he, oddly enough, had named *The Quarrytown Augur*. He had been in town with his venture only a few months, during which time he had earnestly striven to place the paper on a set of sound financial legs. But the venture was still a little shaky, and needed much bolstering. Is it not, therefore, reasonable to suppose that Mr. Howe would take advantage of any popular tide that might assist him in his task? So he came forth in a column and a half editorial in which he denounced Mr. O'Leary and his proposed business venture with the best rhetoric, the keenest punctuation, and the cleanest proof reading he could command under the circumstances.

The Quarrytown folks prepared to resist to the limit the granting of a license to Mr. O'Leary. They proposed to show the people of Blackwood county the

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kind of stuff of which they were made. Down at Bourbon there were a lot of licensed places where even a citizen of Quarrytown might step behind a friendly shelter and "smile" in undisturbed enjoyment. But Quarrytown was on a different plane.

The day for the hearing of the application arrived. It was a beautiful September day. No frost had as yet formed, but there had been one or two heavy autumnal rains. The dust was gone and the pastures had become green and sweet once more as in early spring. The better element of Quarrytown had made all arrangements to go to Bourbon, after the manner of a political rally.

The Quarrytown military band was to be at the head of the procession, in its own band wagon. This vehicle was a gorgeous spectacle. It had once been the property of a circus which had become stranded in that part of Indiana. It had a big plate glass mirror on each side and was resplendent in gilt and silver. Six horses were required to draw this wonderful chariot and were guided by the driver who sat in state on a pinnacle in front.

A cloud-burst or even the crack of doom could not have more completely astonished and paralyzed the inhabitants of Bourbon than the advent of that procession. What on earth had the Bourbon people done to be thus visited? The merchant left his counter, the butcher his meat block, the blacksmith his anvil and all ranged themselves along the sidewalk and stared with open mouths at this unadvertised attraction.

As has been hinted, one political party had full control of Blackwood county. Every member of the board of county commissioners, who granted retail licenses in Indiana, was a member of that party. Quarrytown had always been conspicuous for the large ma-

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jority it rolled up on the opposite side at each election. Consequently, the town's standing with the small-fry politicians at Bourbon was none of the best. Mr Patrick O'Leary, the applicant, had always been faithful to the party, and the resident members of his trade likewise claimed allegiance to that party. Of course, they were all for Pat and against "the d—n fanatics," a title they bestowed upon the Quarrytown people.

The hour for hearing the application arrived. The parties and their counsel on both sides appeared in evidence. The town's people filled the room where the commissioners' court was held, and the court house halls and corridors as well. The remonstrants had brought their own attorney, a dark-skinned, wiry, little fellow named Nessey. He was not remarkable for his brilliance, and yet he was a close student, and a clear-headed young man. Mr. O'Leary had employed a big, red-faced ex-judge, named Slawson, who was as unseemly in his habits as it is possible for a man to become, but notwithstanding, was a shrewd and crafty lawyer, as well as a forceful and eloquent speaker.

The court was called to order and it was announced that the board was ready to consider Mr. O'Leary's application to retail liquor in Quarrytown. The trial was set in motion by Mr. O'Leary's side in an effort to prove their client's character. He was shown to be a high class, moral man by a perfect "cloud of witnesses." And yet, as one observed the kind of men who came upon the witness stand in his behalf, one could not help thinking that the proposition that the moon is made of green cheese could just as easily have been established by the same witnesses. The testimony in O'Leary's favor, however, laying aside certain misgivings derived from the appearance of those

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who testified, was certainly satisfactory, and Judge Slawson settled himself back in his chair fully persuaded that the other side could not break down the case he had made, nor gainsay what had been shown respecting the amiable character of his client.

It was now time for the young Quarrytown attorney to bestir himself. A witness was promptly put upon the witness stand, and the examination was about to proceed.

"By the way, young man," said the old ex-judge, in a voice loud enough to be heard throughout the room, and in a most patronizing manner, "didn't you tell me your name was 'Necessity'? I have forgotten."

"No, no, Judge," responded the attorney with smiling courtesy, "my name is not 'Necessity,' it is Nessey, sir, Nessev."

"Oh-h, to be sure," in his gruff, bass, and yet pleasing voice, apparently talking to himself, but really to the audience; "I thought it was 'Necessity!' I don't see how I could have made such a mistake. Unless"—here a broad grin overspread his features, "unless—it was because he knows no law!"

A roar of laughter and approval came up from the side of the applicant. The younger attorney bit his lip, colored slightly, but made no retort to the old lawyer's jocularities.

With the Quarrytown people the question of evidence was not such an easy matter. Possibly, they did not feel justified in using their imagination quite so freely as the versatile O'Leary and his retainers had done, and they may have felt constrained by the old-fashioned and somewhat obsolete notion that they should stick to the truth. It must be admitted that the Quarrytown folks didn't know very much about O'Leary. Nessey hadn't been able to "dig up" very

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much against him. Oh, yes; they did prove that the applicant had run a "barrel house" and a "wine room" in the city, and that bad men and disreputable women had been in the habit of congregating there. "But a little thing like that," as Judge Slawson so aptly put it, "ought not to damn the character of any citizen of this republic!" How could it be shown that Mr. O'Leary, good easy man, was responsible for the shortcomings of the people who might, forsooth, be attracted to his place of business? Was he a mind reader or a medicine man that he might be able to see the Devil inside of those around him and cast him out? "To make a man responsible for the inside condition of his customers," again using the fertile vocabulary of Judge Slawson, "would be carrying the doctrine of 'my brother's keeper' beyond the pale of common sense!"

After the evidence on both sides was in, and the speeches of the attorneys concluded, the commissioners, having retired for consultation, returned almost immediately and announced, that, after hearing the evidence and the argument of counsel, they had decided in favor of petitioner, and would grant him the license.

The president of the board, a shrewd, cunning politician of the old school, delivered the message to those who nervously remained to hear it. He said, in effect, that he and all of his uncles, aunts and cousins had ever been friends to virtue and morality. That he had been nursed, so to speak, at a temperate and a moral breast. That his old mother, who, he assured the audience, dashing aside a few tears specially prepared for the occasion, was now "a saint in Heaven," had instilled those noble principles within him while he was yet a child at her knee, and as a duck takes to water early, so had he.

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He had never been drunk in his life, and he was a man who never frequented drinking places. To him the most abhorred object in this world was a drunken man. How he hoped and prayed that all men might become sober and temperate!

How he did admire the spirit and enthusiasm of the Quarrytown people! What an example they had set that day! The eyes of the whole country were upon them. What influence their conduct would have on future generations! Um! It was a sight. He was sure that each member of the board shared his sentiments. How deeply he regretted that the law was as it was! How glad he would be if it were only different! But under the law they were compelled to grant the license prayed for in Mr. O'Leary's application. Personally, he would be glad to do otherwise, and he felt that each member of the board would be disposed the same way, if it were not for the law, the inexorable law.

CHAPTER II.

THE editor of the Quarrytown Augur, one Thursday evening, walked down the stairway leading from his office in the Balk Block, out upon the sidewalk, and as he did so he noticed, standing beside the entrance, a large, shock-headed young man.

"Air you the feller that runs the little paper what's printed upstairs?" he asked, abruptly walking up to Mr. Howe in a manner that was, to say the least, aggressive. As he drew nigh, the fumes of liquor could be detected on his breath, and his poise was somewhat unsteady.

The person thus addressed said courteously:

"Yes, sir; I am he. What can I do for you?"

"Wall, sir; I kin tell ye what ye kin do fur me, an' I'd like to have it done as quick as the Lord will let ye!"

"Ah," said the editor, but illy suppressing a sneer that had a tendency to overspread his features, "is it a matter so pressing as all that? Pray tell me what it is!"

"Wal, sir; to be plain about it," answered the red-faced individual, "ye went an' printed a blamed lie on me in yer little thumb paper last week, an' it ain't a-settin' any too well, nuther!"

"Indeed," responded the editor of the village oracle, considerably nettled by the tough's insulting and depreciative language.

"Don't git 'gay,' Mr. Editor, or I'll beat the head off of ye!"

The burly bumpkin squared himself, and drew back his clenched fist, which in the gathering dusk appeared to Mr. Howe to be fully as big as a ham! "I



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know well enough that I'm tough an' onery, but I don't propose to stand everything!"

It didn't require a mind reader to determine that the bully would undertake to carry into execution his savage threat upon the slightest further irritation. Mr. Howe was no coward, but he was hardly prepared for such extreme measures on so short a notice. His opponent was much larger than he, and, evidently a very moon is made of green cheese could just as easily have powerful fellow. They were quite alone on the sidewalk there and nightfall had almost arrived. The editor couldn't divest himself of the impression that one blow from that herculean fist might mean more than temporary inconvenience. Perhaps it were well to resort to a little diplomacy. And then really if one had to fight fist and skull (if he should last so long as that!) might it not be wise to ascertain what for? Possibly, some wrong had been done this bruiser, though the editor had no remembrance of ever having seen him before. So he yielded to this prudent line of reasoning and asked:

"What's your name?"

"My name's Seymour, James Seymour," was the reply.

"What did the paper say about you, Mr. Seymour, that has hurt your feelings?"

"Wal, sir; I kin mighty soon tell ye: In that air column that ye call the p'lice court happenings, in last week's paper, ye told yer readers a heap o' things that I didn't see no use o' tellin' 'em. Ye said, among other things, that I was drunken an' disrep'table, an' a disgrace to sich a fair an' moral kimmunity. Then ye turned in an' tol' 'em that I was a common loafer at the 'doggerly.' Then ye tol' 'em a bout me bein' fined

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in the Kangaroo court f'r brutally an' cruelly hittin' Jim Fair—"

"I don't remember anything about that," said Mr. Howe, interrupting; "what do you mean by the 'Kangaroo Court,' Mr. Seymour?"

"Oh, that's what the boys call ole Squire Marley's court. It's been called that ever since Sam Winkle—pore Sam has since gone to Jeffersonville!—an' George Dunn, the prosecutor, got into a fight durin' a trial. The ole jestic jumped clean over a big table to git away, an' it's been called 'the Kangaroo Court' ever since!"

There was something so ludicrous in the picture presented by Seymour's description of the justice's adjourning court so informally, that the young newspaper man could hardly suppress a smile. The tough continued his recital:

"Wal sir, ye tol' how I was fined f'r hittin' Jim Fair, an' I don't find no fault with that nuther. I did hand Jimmy a poke an' tumbled him over an' over until he landed in the middle o' the next day. But you, in the wind-up o' the article, you said I hit him with a pair o' brass knucks! Honest, hope-may-die this minute if I had a thing in my han's but jist my fist!"

"Really, Mr. Seymour," replied his listener. "I don't see much to cause offense; for I now recall all of the details of the article. I obtained my facts from Mr. Fair himself and the justice. You frankly admit the facts and say you don't blame us for publishing them. You say you struck Fair—you don't deny that. Now, it seems to me there's very little to complain of."

"Very little! very little!" excitedly exclaimed the other, "when I only hit Jim with my bare fist, an' never used a weapon on no man in my life? For you to go off 'half cocked' an' inform the public that I hit him

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with 'knucks' when I kin whip him the best day he ever seen in a fair fist fight!"

"Oh, I understand," responded Mr. Howe, "you admit the drunkenness, and the loafing and even the fighting, and the publication of such things about you gives no offense, but when it comes to charging you with the use of a weapon, why, you are sensitive along that line?"

"Yes, sir; that's the idee. Now you see what sort of a correction I want f'r you to make me. Will ye do it?"

"Certainly, I will; if it's the truth."

"But d—n it, hain't I jest tol' you 'twas the truth! What d'ye suppose I'd be spendin' my breath f'r?"

"I will promise you this, Mr. Seymour," said the editor, starting away, and feeling bolder the very moment he walked out from under the shadow of that ominous fist, "that I will carefully investigate the facts in this case, and publish the truth, whatever that may be!"

"Wal, ye'll publish wat I tell you to; f'r it is the truth, or by ———! I'll know the reason why!"

If the last words had not been uttered, Ezra Howe might have been able to think upon the bump-kin and his peculiar ideas with a degree of allowance. His first pique at the latter's rough and threatening language had somewhat worn away during the rather interesting conversation that had followed, and Mr. Howe was disposed to humor the "fool according to his folly." But the last remark upset everything. The more he thought about the threatening manner of the tough the more incensed and indignant he became. A dozen times or more he wished he had defied him to his teeth, or rather to his fists. Why had he not refused to make any concessions to one who demand-

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ed them so uncivilly? Why had he not thrust him from his path at once? There were, indeed, some very substantial reasons why he had not, but the same did not now appear so real, so impending, as it were.

Nevertheless, Mr. Howe hunted up James Fair and questioned him searchingly. Fair was positive that he had been struck with a weapon, and, judging from his appearance, it might have been a pile driver. He hooted at the idea of his assailant's having used his bare fist. "Knucks," he insisted, "brass knucks," had been the means of his undoing. A deep and painful gash bore evidence to the accuracy of his conjecture.

Next the editor interviewed the physician who, immediately after the affray, had taken a dozen stitches in the wounded man's cheek in order to draw together the gaping wound. The medical gentleman, likewise, believed a weapon, presumably **metallic knuckles** worn on the hand, had been used to make such a **delaceration**. Oh, yes, he admitted, with that deliberation affected only by the learned, such an injury **might have been caused** by a blow from the bare knuckles, but he **hardly** believed the wound in question had been so caused.

On next Friday, the day of the weekly appearance of his paper, Editor Howe opened up his columns, as he had suggested, and returned to one James Seymour with a zeal and enthusiasm that was really surprising. In so doing, he gave that rather unimportant individual a lot of free advertising, more, indeed, than the limited space in the *Augur* justified. Among other particulars, he observed that James Seymour **had** struck James Fair with a pair of "brass knucks" and that he was a coward and a bully for having done so!

CHAPTER III.

IT WAS Friday afternoon. The Quarrytown Augur, with its article respecting the village bully and other matters of interest had been carted away to the post office. So far as Ezra H. Howe was concerned, his week's work was done. He put on his hat and walked away from the printing office in search of needed exercise. He had soon left the confines of the village, and passed into the open country. On his right there was an extended stretch of woodland, through which flowed a stream of some size, though it was called in local parlance by the undignified name of the "crick." The stream having passed the village, meandered away amidst russet corn fields. The air was fresh and health-inspiring. The fields no longer sustained the tired husbandman with the **promise** of fruitage, but the fruitage had come. That cunning artist, Old Jack Frost, with his brush so dainty light and yet so wonderfully potent, had touched the leaves with yellow and purple. The shifting dust of summer had been washed away from every leaf and spire, and all nature appeared to have been reburnished and reinvigorated.

The editor left the highway and climbed the fence into the woodland. He had always delighted in long rambles. At such times, he would give himself up to pleasant fancies and to the building of air castles. This day he was buried in a deeper, more pleasant reverie than usual, nor had the Augur or its financial concerns (which needed to be thought about seriously enough, one may imagine!) any place whatever in its proprietor's thought.

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The truth is, Mr. Howe was just about to yield to a very prevalent tendency among young men—he was on the verge of falling in love. It was but a short time after he had arrived in Quarrytown that he chanced to meet Miss Aimee Leonard. Her comeliness and grace attracted his attention. He made inquiries respecting her, and found that she was the daughter of Dr. Leonard, one of the wealthiest and most aristocratic of Quarrytown's citizens. The young man also learned that the young lady was a faithful attendant at the Presbyterian church, and that being Mr. Howe's own denomination, he found it easy from that time to be persistent in his attendance at all regular services.

More than that, the young editor had been invited into the choir, where he had, for a number of Sabbaths, sung a respectable tenor. Indeed, on one or two occasions where the choir had essayed a little something out of the ordinary, and had selected but two voices to render a musical composition, the editor and Miss Leonard were almost invariably chosen. Everybody said their voices blended perfectly, and the young man was translated!

As Mr. Howe penetrated more deeply into the woodland, he came to a peculiar natural formation. It was a ridge several hundred feet long, and rising abruptly to a height of perhaps forty feet. It had been named by the villagers and country folks, "The Devil's Back Bone." The stream flowed hard by, and in some places had digged deeply into the side of this mound, making abrupt precipices. The sod had gradually encroached upon the surface until the entire mound was carpeted in living green, save where the stream had eaten into the bank. Great forest trees grew here and there.

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This freak of nature, or it may have been of primeval art, aroused the young man's curiosity. What a romantic place this is, he thought. There might be in its sides somewhere a robber's cave. Or, possibly, there were gold and jewels buried deeply at the foundation where the leaden-headed mound builder had begun his herculean task. He glanced around, giving rein to his pleasing imaginings. He saw no cave entrance, however, nor did he observe the glitter of rubies or diamonds amidst the grasses. Instead, he saw tethered among the bushes a cunning little pony hitched to a phaeton. The shrewd little beast had seen the editor some time before and had ceased to browse upon the rich foliage about him, and stood regarding the stranger with grave and sagacious eye.

Howe ran up the side of the mound, clinging to the bushes at the steepest place, and stood at last upon the crest. A more extended view presented itself. The soft October breezes fanned his temples. Toward the east, with a background of purple forests, russet fields and verdant slopes, he saw the modest spires and white cottages of Quarrytown. On the other three sides, the hazy, Indian summer sky bent down and touched the encircling line of woodland. Between this tri-colored horizon and the viewer himself, there were rich pasture lands running up the shoulder of the hills, and waving fields with here and there a stately farm house with tall wind mill and green shutters standing out in bold relief against the clay-colored sky. Nor was the eye the only sense to be pleased. The air was filled with the odors of drying corn, mellowing apples, ripening grapes, and the memory-awakening smell of frost-bitten leaves.

As Mr. Howe thus stood and gazed around him, he heard a peal of merry laughter farther up the ridge.

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He glanced in that direction and saw three young ladies seated under a wide-spreading maple tree, surrounded by a profusion of golden rod and purple leaves. A closer inspection revealed the fact that one of the three was none other than the charming Miss Aimee Leonard, who had so agreeably occupied the editor's thoughts during the greater part of his ramble. He was delighted beyond measure, and was just about to walk toward the girls, when his attention was drawn in the direction of the path over which he had just come. There was a terrific threshing and beating among the bushes as if a couple of elephants had just been turned loose, and he heard a voice say: "There he is, Jim, give it to him!"

Howe glanced down and saw two rugged rascals running up the slope in his very path. They were red-faced and breathless. He saw that one was James Seymour, the half-drunken rowdy of the day before. He instantly surmised the latter's errand. Doubtless Seymour had read the paper and was more than ever enraged. He must now be reckoned with and that was certain. Learning, as he easily might, that the editor had strolled out of town along the highway leading west, and knowing that he was probably alone and unprotected, the bully had started in hot pursuit, bringing along a kindred spirit, both of them literally spoiling for a fight.

Back of the spot where Mr. Howe was standing, was one of those steep places where the creek had gouged deeply into the side of the ridge, and it was probably twenty-five or thirty feet to the water below. Certainly there was no retreat this time for Mr. Howe, had he been disposed to flee.

In less than a minute the rowdies had clambered up and stood upon the crest of the ridge, which was

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not to exceed ten feet wide at that point. Not much room for a boxing tournament, to be sure, and yet a most serious one was impending!

"Yes, you air the smart young feller who promised to publish the truth about me in yer little paper, ain't ye? An' that's how ye keep yer promises, is it? Now, d—n ye! what have ye got to say f'r yerself this time?"

"I tried to publish the truth about you, sir," the editor replied. "I tried to fulfill my promise to the letter."

"The h—— you did," hissed the burly ruffian, making a savage lunge at the young newspaper man, who stepped nimbly to one side. The rowdy almost went over the brink, but saved himself just in time.

"Look out, Jim, you'll tumble over!" cautioned his companion. Seymour had been drinking and was a trifle unsteady, on his pegs. More than that he was so infuriated as to be absolutely regardless of consequences. He struck at the young man several times, but the latter dodged right and left out of harm's way. At last, he rushed upon the smaller man and they clinched. Backward and forward they swayed on the very edge of the steep bank.

"Look out there; look out there!" yelled Seymour's friend; "by George, they're goin' over!" and over they went.

There was a frightened scream from the group of young ladies, a quick giving way of the earth beneath Mr. Howe's feet, and he felt himself falling. The next instant he was submerged in cold water, and was sinking. His hold on his assailant had been loosened in the fall, and he soon arose to the surface of the water. The first object that met his gaze was the three frightened ladies' faces, peering over the

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ridge at him. Being a good swimmer, and the pool wherein he had fallen being of no very great extent, though quite deep, Howe made but a few strokes until he stood upon the bank opposite to the ridge, dripping but unhurt. The other was not so fortunate. He arose to the surface, but being unable to swim, sank quickly. Again he arose.

"Help! help!" he screamed; "I'm drownin'!"

Help was impossible from any source except from the man whom the ruffian had sought to punish. Without a moment's hesitation the young editor sprang once more into the water. A few strokes brought him to the spot whence Seymour had disappeared. The drowning man came up for the third time. Howe seized him and in spite of Seymour's frantic struggles, towed him safely to the shore and dragged him upon the green bank.

"Bravo! bravo! Mr. Howe," the editor heard a sweet voice say, which he fondly imagined he could recognize.

"Bully fur you, ole man!" shouted a coarser, more masculine voice, "if Jim Seymour ever tries to lay the weight o' his finger on you again, I'll bust his head fur him. Jest publish any ole thing ye want to, it's all paid fur, now!"

By this time the rowdy had revived. The cold plunge made him well nigh sober. He stood up, a sheepish look upon his face, shook the water from his garments like a big Newfoundland dog. Then he came directly to Mr. Howe with extended hand.

"Ye've saved my life, an' I want to thank you f'r it. I didn't deserve to have you treat me this well. I was a-tryin' to do you injury, an' ye turned in and saved my life. It's not of much value to the kim-



Russell H. Anderson — 15 —

HE MADE BUT A FEW STROKES UNTIL HE STOOD UPON THE BANK OPPOSITE THE RIDGE, DRIPPING BUT UNHURT.

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munity, but I tell you, Mr. Howe, it's worth a lot to me, an' I never felt it so precious as I did jest then."

"Don't bother about thanking me, Mr. Seymour. I am fully repaid in every particular, and very thankful myself that a kindly Providence permitted our trouble to terminate this way!"

When they had climbed to the crest of the ridge, the water dripping from their clothes, and presenting anything but a holiday appearance, the first one to greet them was Harry Hibson, Seymour's companion.

"Mr. Editor, by George, it's a sight! Never see anything so fine in all my life! It's jest like things happen in a novel! Why, you've mauled the life out o' Jim Seymour, an' he's the best man in Blackwood County! An' ye've done it in a smother an' purtier way than ef ye'd blacked both eyes, smashed his nose, an' caved in a couple o' ribs. I'd a sworn it was all up with Jim, 'cause he can't swim a lick, an' that hole's thirty feet deep!"

Mr. Hibson's enthusiastic observations were interrupted by the approach of three very much interested girls.

"Let me congratulate the hero, too!" said Miss Leonard graciously, extending her pretty hand, and looking up into the face of the young man. "How much more your conduct has complimented you, than **his** has complimented **him**," glancing over her shoulder at the dripping Seymour, who was shaking hands with Hibson. "Such an act of mercy under the circumstances is certainly commendable!" The editor could only smile and blush.

"Let me present you to my friends, Miss Godwin and Miss Ainsworth," she continued, hastily marshaling up her two pretty companions, and presenting them in turn. "And now, Mr. Howe, you are all wet and

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cold, and you must let me drive you home in the pony phaeton. These young ladies have kindly agreed to await my return, and Romeo can make a swift trip."

Mr. Howe looked down at his erstwhile stylish suit, that now clung to him so closely and ungracefully, and hesitated. It was not because Aimée Leonard's company was not most desirable, nor a ride behind the pony was not to be coveted. And yet, on this particular occasion he had much preferred to walk. A short cut down a secluded and unfrequented alley had been very much more to his liking. But the young lady, with a charming tenacity of purpose, insisted.

"Come on, Mr. Howe, you must not stand there in those wet garments like a half-drowned kitten! You will get pneumonia sure!"

Everybody knows that a suit of perfectly wet clothes is calculated to put a damper on the ardor of youth and stifle, to some extent, the brilliant fancies of love's young dream. It tends to keep back and suppress, to some extent, certain delicate sentiments; yet the ride home was full of delightful harmony notwithstanding.

CHAPTER IV.

HA! HA! hi! hi! ho! ho! ho! oh, begorra! Chesney. Oi kin har-rally take me wind whin Oi t'ink av thim domned fules a-dhrivin' befoor the Board in a dilegation! An' they they didn't amount to as mooch as a dhrop av Biddy McCool's tay!"

Pat laughed until the tears came and his sides ached. His companion tried very hard to simulate great glee in order to stand in with the hilarious Mr. O'Leary, but of course, he could not see the occurrence in quite as ridiculous colors as Pat appeared to regard it. Pat's friend had just arrived from the city, and it was early in the forenoon. He was a liquor salesman, representing one of the large wholesale houses in the Hoosier metropolis. Some one, some time or other, has made this sage remark: "All deacons is good; but there's odds in deacons." To paraphrase slightly, one might say: All drummers are good, but there's odds in favor of the whisky drummer, so far as style and make-up are concerned. He, in some particulars, is the "swellest" article in that whole sublime profession. O'Leary had known this particular individual for a long time. The drummer had followed Patrick through all the vicissitudes of his checkered career and had done business with him. In fact, this salesman counted on a substantial order from Mr. O'Leary, it made no difference where he might find him. He was a shrewd, genial, pleasing fellow, and had sense enough to let a loquacious customer "run down" before presenting the claims of his house for trade. Then he would open up his mas-

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sive telescope of alligator hide and give the dealer a nip or two of something fabulously old that made the latter's eyes snap rapturously. When at last he did produce his order book and gently inquire what particular brand of "liquid hardware" the dealer would have sent down, it took a more obdurate soul than Patrick O'Leary to resist him.

So on this morning he had dropped into Mr. O'Leary's cozy barroom, leaned against the mahogany bar while Pat was telling him with all the glow and confidence that success imparts of his victory over the villagers who had sought to prevent him from securing a license.

"Would yees ever belave it, Chesney, but thim domned fules wint t' all the throuble an' the worry av br-ringin' they'r domned auld hor-rns an' blowin' thim, an' batin' they'r auld dhrums, an' singin' ther'r songs befoor the Board. But whin yees auld friend Pathrick sayes all the display they was a-makin', thryin' to chate me out av me legal right, an' kape me from havin' me licenses, Oi says to myself, says Oi: 'Begorra, Oi'll be prizint whin the time rolls by.' So Oi wint to auld Jewge Slawson, and Oi says. says Oi:

" 'Jewge!' says Oi, 'Jewge!'

" 'What'll yees have, Pathrick?' he says.

" 'An' Oi says:

" 'Oi've a case in coort over her-re!'

" 'Ah,' says the Jewge, 'the little mather av yees licenses is it, Pathrick? Oi've been radin' in the pa-aper about yees applica-ation,' says he.

" 'The same it is, Jewge,' says Oi. 'An' phat would yees be afther char-rgin'a fella to go in an' clane thim up f'r me?'

" 'Ah, since it's yees, me auld friend, Pathrick

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O'Leary,' he says, 'Oi'll smash their-i slats f'r thim f'r-f'r-,' he says a-lookin' at yees auld friend rale close because he was afraid Oi'd kick because 'twould be too mooch, 'f'r- f'r fifty!'

" 'Fifty nawthin' Jewge, yees givin' me a bool av soup!' says Oi.

" 'No, Pathrick, no, indade,' he says, 'but don't yees say, Pathrick, Oi'd be makin' thum domred fanatics up at Quarrytown mad at me 11 year-rs. Oi can't afford to do it f'r no less!'

" 'Bah!' says Oi, pretendin' to be put out because of the pr-rice; 'could yees afford to do it f'r some more, Jewge?'

" 'Oi reckon Oi could, Oi reckon Oi could, Pathrick!' he says, not at all understandin' what Oi was dhrivin' at, 'what d'yees mane, Pathrick?'

" 'Wa-al her-re, auld man,' says Oi, dhroppin' a hoondred 'daddies' on the ta-able befoor him, 'how'll that plaze yees, Jewge?'

" 'Foine, foine, Pathrick!' he says a-jumpin' up from wher-r he was sittin.

" 'Wa-al br-ring yees auld shelalie, an' come right along wid me!'

" 'Oi had me witnesses an' me ividence all riddy, an' Oi joost tauld the Jewge phat to say an' phat to do, an' yees kin jist bet he did it, an' we joost showed thim wher-r to git off at!'

" 'Wa-al, Chesney, the boord wasn't out more'n half a minute, till they's come a filin' in wan afther the ither, auld man Tuesselman a-bringin' up the rear-r, an' they says, 'Pathrick, yees moost 'a' had the longes' pole, hi! hi! yees knocked the persimmon, an' yees goin' to git yees licenses!'

" 'An' the pore divil fanatics, yees ought to see thim tur-rn tail an' snake away. An' iver since Oi've

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been her-re they's been thot shamed av they's domned fule selves, that they could har-rdly look a fella in the face or spake to him at all, at all!"

"An' since Oi've got me dhure open, an' me thrade somephat star-rted, Oi wint to thim, an' Oi says, palaverin', yees know, 'Byes, Oi only mane to give yees a good, quiet pla-ace. Yees moos'n't fear-r Pathrick O'Leary. An' dhrop in now an' thin, gintlemin, an' take wan on me an' it shan't cost yees a Johnny red.' But niver a wor-rd did they answer, they be so domned badly whipped. But Oi could tell that me visit plazed thim foine, an', Chesney, it won't be two wakes befoor the vera laders av the hull push will be dhrinkin' good, auld lager behind the shelther av me back dhure."

"Glad to hear of your success, Pat," returned his companion, being able, at last, to get in a word, "I hope you'll do well here. You always were a shifty fellow, and could make money where nine men would fail. Our house has always said that you could dispose of more goods, everything else being considered, than any customer we have."

The gracious compliment struck a responsive chord in Mr. O'Leary's manly chest. He glanced approvingly at his well-dressed visitor, and was anxious to make some display of him. It would give the citizens a better impression of Mr. O'Leary, and thus help allay such small prejudice as, he thought, remained against his business. So he took his fastidious friend and dropped into the small general store of Sandy McClain, a few doors away.

"Will yees plaze give us some seegars?" said Patrick, flashing a ten dollar bill in the eyes of the merchant. O'Leary had plenty of cigars in his own ranch, and, besides, Mr. Chesney had brought along a choice

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assortment to give away to his customers. But then, Pat wanted to be sociable, and was willing to spend **part** of his money with the other merchants. It creates a better feeling to be fraternal, he reasoned. The saloonist and the drummer were standing in front of the cigar case in the forward part of the store, waiting to be supplied, and it was Pat's further intention to introduce Mr. Chesney to the merchant, who was at the end of the counter below, leaning against the shelves. He did not move when the twain entered, nor when he heard Mr. O'Leary's request.

"I can't do that, gentlemen, not at all!" he said nonchalantly.

The saloonkeeper and his companion stared until their eyes looked as big as the latter's big diamond.

"Wa-al then, will yees plaze **sell** us some seegars?" Pat again ventured, with a silly grin, which was not improved one whit by a would-be silly wink at the drummer. He was trying to persuade himself and his elegant visitor that the merchant was humorously objecting to the use of the word "give." The next utterance of Sandy, however, cleared away all doubt as to his meaning.

"Can't do it, Mr. O'Leary, can't do it. I've got to depend upon the people here for my patronage, and if I should have anything whatever to do with you, even to the extent of selling you the smallest article, they would absolutely refuse to enter my place of business. I'm sorry, sir, sorry, but I'm compelled to stand by the 'boycott.' And it would please me mighty well if you didn't come in here any more!"

"The domned fanatics!" said O'Leary to his friend, when they again reached the sidewalk after being thus summarily dismissed. "Don't that bate the Divil!"

"That appears to be the intention," was the latter's

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reply, but neither he nor his companion thought what a singular meaning might have been given those last words.

The liquor salesman was to take his departure on the eleven o'clock train, and that hour had almost arrived. Before going he made bold to offer this observation:

"Pat, I thought you told me you had such a fine opening here?" Then without paying any attention to the other's moody silence he added: "I wouldn't want to do business at all among such miserable cranks as these folks surely are!"

The erstwhile hilarious Pat had taken a tumble from the high position he so shortly before arrogated unto himself. He had been humbled before his friend, and was now harrassed by the thought that doubtless the elegant drummer would have many a hearty laugh in telling the other members of the trade how Pat O'Leary, down at Quarrytown, had been discomfited by a little, one-horse store keeper. To think of such a catastrophe wounded Pat's pride deeply. He laid his hand upon the drummer's sleeve, and made this simple, yet wonderfully serious request:

"Say, Chesney, Oi've always been yees friend, auld bye, haven't Oi?"

"Indeed you have, Pat!"

"An' Oi've always pathronized yees auld house, too, haven't Oi, now?"

"Sure you have, old fellow!"

"Wa-al now, Oi wish yees wouldn't say annything about the pore fule rayfusin' me the see-gars whin yees have occasion to sell the byes over the state anny goods! Will yees now? They'd be laughin' at yees auld friend, an', begorra! Oi'd niver hear-r the lasht of it!"

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"All right, Pat," he promised, "not a word."

But after Mr. Chesney had gone, Patrick could not dismiss the humiliating incident from his mind. It made a far deeper impression upon the unlettered saloon man than a really serious injury would have produced upon a broader man.

"Such cr-ranks an' fanatics, annyway! They'se don't want to give up even afther they'se been baten to a sthandstill, at all, at all! But they'se domned fules! Oi'll show thim whether they'se not sell me phat Oi want! Oi'll smash they'se domned auld counthers in."

The more Mr. O'Leary thought upon this last rebuff the angrier he became, and as he grew angrier he began to imbibe his own goods with more than usual abandon. He found the latter greatly facilitated the growth of the very sentiments he had set about to acquire. He considered the "boycott" as an unspeakable outrage and insult to a "gintleman" who had once served as a "mimber" of the council in the metropolis. Such an insult, indeed, could only be expiated by bloody noses and blacked eyes. How he gloated over the prospect of administering them! The muscles of his strong right arm moved, twitched like those of a cat when about to pounce on a mouse. As Patrick thought of all he would do to them, he kept swilling his own broth. That day he had begun his potations by drinking several glasses of a most choice old rye that his drummer friend carried for the especial delight of the trade. At last, however, he had dropped down to his own level, and had been swigging his own "forty-rod" at a lively rate. It was the same stuff that he kept with which to supply the "rag-tag and bob-tail" of Quarrytown, and was a sure producer of trouble. Indeed, it was the regular fighting kind of whisky. The saloon man kept up his draughts until

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about the middle of the afternoon, at which time he reached that semi-demoniac condition which enables a man to beat his wife or strangle his baby, and became, as is usual in such cases, literally crazy for a fight.

He was proposing to break through the "boycott" or absolutely pulverize the individual who dared oppose him. He was going to make an example of some one. He would not bother Sandy McClain. He was too small a fry. He would attack some of the leaders, those who had caused Sandy to do as he had done. He selected the store of Samson Meek, which was by far the most extensive in the town. Indeed, it was so imposing and considerable that it had received from its proprietor—a reasonably modest and unassuming man—the high-sounding title of "The Dry Goods Emporium." Mr. Meek was one of the most prominent and determined opponents O'Leary had encountered in the entire village. He had spent his money, time and talents in helping organize the people against the proposed liquor dispensary. Mr. O'Leary did Mr. Meek the high honor of regarding him as the head and front of the whole offending.

So that afternoon, calm without, but a seething cauldron within, the saloon man walked into the store of Mr. Samson Meek. He pretended he was interested in a pair of pants. There was a towering pile of those useful articles on a long counter in front of which Mr. O'Leary had come to a halt. They had been placed there for sale, that was evident. Carefully selecting a pair (in which task he was in no-wise assisted, or disturbed) that he proposed to purchase or fight over, Pat picked them up from the assortment, and demanded:

"How d'yees sell this pair-r av pants?"

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The nearest clerk, instead of approaching with courteous and affable alacrity, retreated as if he had suddenly been brought up against a smallpox suspect. And the next one below him followed his example with a similar degree of precipitancy. The latter, however, ran to the rear of the store and summoned the proprietor. Mr. Meek came at once, and stationed himself opposite the obstreperous customer, standing behind the clothing counter. His immediate nearness was to Pat's liking.

"An' how did yees say yees sold this pair-r av pants?" he again inquired.

"We don't sell anything to you, Patrick O'Leary. We cannot forget, sir, how you foisted your infamous business upon us in the face of the unanimous protest of the whole community. You are invited, sir, to leave this store, and requested never to darken its door again!"

This was the very sort of answer the saloon man had been expecting, indeed, wishing for. He had been accumulating wrath as a Leyden jar stores up electricity, and for just such a discharge as the occasion now demanded. He flew into a violent rage in an instant.

"Yees domned, auld dog!" he yelled. "Come out fr'm ferninst that counther, an' dom' yees auld sowl, Oi'll bate the head off av yees shouldhers!"

"I'll not do that at all, sir," was the calm, self-restrained reply of Mr. Meek, "but you get out of my store this instant! Out with you! Go!"

O'Leary was tempted to jump over the clothing counter and throttle his insulter where he stood. But the counter was high and the pile of clothing higher still. He walked back and forth like a caged lion, but only for a moment. There was a large rack filled with

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new, steel-ribbed umbrellas. A sudden impulse came over the infuriated man. He caught up one of the umbrellas, quick as a wink, and before the store keeper could dodge or ward off the blow, he struck him with such force over the head that he brought Meek to his knees. The weapon was too light, however, to do much damage. Mr. Meek retreated. Down along the counter on the inside he ran, the saloon man eagerly pursuing him on the outside. At the end of the counter below, there was a passage way. At that point the enraged man could seize his victim. He would beat him, oh, how he would beat him, the "domned auld spalpeen!"

But just opposite the end of the counter toward which they were running there was a small portion of unoccupied shelving, and in that portion of empty shelving there lay a shining revolver. It had lain in that vacant spot awaiting just such a foreshadowed emergency for many years. It is said that if you keep a thing seven years, you will find use for it. Before the merchant reached the passage way he stopped, reached up with an excited hand and seized the weapon. His assailant ran by, turned and was coming up the counter on the inside, with the umbrella uplifted, ready to strike again. The revolver was in his very face before he noticed that his intended quarry had armed himself.

There was a flash, a quick, startling report, that rang out through the store with ear-splitting distinctness. The combatants were enveloped in a cloud of smoke.

When they were next seen, the saloonkeeper was leaving Mr. Meek's presence and the muzzle of his revolver as rapidly as one might be expected to travel, walking, as he was, backward and keeping an

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anxious eye riveted on so important an object as a loaded pistol. Mr. Meek was following up his advantage and saying at every step: "Get out! Get out! Get out of my store, you drunken ruffian, you cur, you bully, you miserable coward!" His poised hand trembled with anger and excitement. He appeared not to notice that his command was being obeyed with reasonable promptness, and fingered the trigger of his artillery, much to O'Leary's increasing consternation, with a most persistent carelessness.

A crowd had now gathered and was filling the store. The majority of those who ran in were disposed to take sides with the merchant, for Mr. Meek was a popular and respected citizen, and they began to jeer and hoot at O'Leary. Nor was the latter wholly without partisans. Among those who ranged themselves on his side were James Seymour and Harry Hibson.

"What's the matter, Pat? What have they been doin' to ye?" Seymour asked.

"Oh, begorra, byes, they'se been doin' a plinty!" O'Leary answered, wiping the blood stains from a well-defined furrow across his cheek, which adamant member had likewise suffered by having the same blown full of coarse black powder grains.

"That auld Make pulled his domned auld gun off in me vera face!"

It was evident that Patrick was considerably dazed and befuddled, though hardly as badly intoxicated as he had been, and he had also lost all desire for a fight. At least he didn't need to be held.

"Why didn't you knock his d——— old block off?" demanded Seymour.

"Arrah! now Jimmie, me bye, ye'es flatter me, ye'es flatter me!" answered Pat, who was now com-

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pletely out of the store and out of range of that dangerous piece of ordnance. He was still followed by the laughing crowd who regarded his present disfigurement as a matter of much amusement.

"Oi considher meself domned well off to git away wid a few powdher stains. Yees friend, Pathrick, had a close call, me byes, a close call! Who'd 'a' t'ought the domned auld counther stick would 'a shot yees!"

And thus surrounded by a few of his kind, Mr. O'Leary sought the safety and seclusion of his own place of business, whence he was not followed, and wherein he was not, at that time, disturbed.

CHAPTER V.

IT WAS a night in the early part of December. A heavy gale from the northwest was blowing, laden with ice particles and cold, chilling rain drops. On this night some eighteen or twenty persons were housed within the comfortable saloon of Mr. Patrick O'Leary. They were completely isolated from the outside world, the streets having become completely deserted. Some of these persons who were enjoying Mr. O'Leary's hospitality were old, broken-down "plugs," to speak in horse language, whose days of usefulness and respectability had long since passed, and they were now such that no influence could improve, no surroundings reform. Persons they were who loved vice because it is vice, and reveled in iniquity because they had learned to hate decency and order as by a kind of second nature. To speak in the vernacular of the times, they were persons who would persist in remaining wet after the whole community had become dry. But two or three who congregated in this unsavory resort were not of that kind, but were young, innocent and must learn by experience, because they had absolutely failed to profit by precept or example. Now that they were just starting out upon life's journey, being full of the fearlessness and impudence of youth, and withal, possessed of all its advantages and prismatic views, one can hardly understand why they should have taken that route which will inevitably end in shallows and in miseries. All the preachers in Christendom, all the mothers' prayers that have ever been uttered, all the mothers' tears that have ever been shed, have not

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disposed of that tendency, the well-known tendency of wayward youth.

James Godwin was among them, and he was scarcely eighteen years of age. His mother was a widow with two children, Nellie, who was one of the teachers in the Quarrytown public schools, and Jimmie. The father died when the children were small, leaving the widow almost penniless. She had faced her sad and deserted condition bravely, however, and by self-sacrifice had provided for her babies until they had reached an age at which they were able to help themselves.

Nellie had, in early years, manifested commendable aptitude in her studies, and, being a girl, her mother had been able to keep her in school almost continuously. No young woman was more popular with school officials and teachers than was she, and, in consequence thereof, as soon as she had graduated from the high school as Quarrytown, she was asked to become one of the teachers in a lower grade. Her success was abundant from the start, and now she rejoiced in the fact that she was able to help her faithful mother and make even her brother's lot in life more cheerful and encouraging.

But Jimmie had not fared as well as his bright sister in life's battle. He had been compelled to quit school, though it almost broke his mother's heart, and go to work in order to help support the struggling household. He had been forced to take employment anywhere and everywhere, sometimes as a mere laborer, and always at a boy's meager recompense. The result was that he became discouraged and had lost ambition. The road to success appeared so long, the goal seemed so far away, and the burdens he must carry were so heavy! He had drifted into bad com-

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pany, and of late had become fond of dropping into O'Leary's. It was one place, whatever faults it had, where they did not look down upon a sensitive lad because he had become a laborer.

Another one of those who had assembled beside Mr. O'Leary's cozy fire deserves to be described. His name was Joseph B. Lipscombe, and he hailed originally from the state of Tennessee. He was old, grizzled and shaggy. He looked at you always out of one corner of his good eye, for the other orb was sightless and opaque. He owned a farm "in his wife's name." He was the most notorious man in Blackwood County. In fact, his name had passed into every day usage as a standard of comparison. It was not at all uncommon to hear this utterance in any part of Blackwood county: "Why, you are a bigger liar than old Joe Lipscombe!"

It was only a short time before that this old citizen had hobbled into O'Leary's and had seated himself, among the other worthies, at the table.

"Pat, gimme a glass o' beer," Lipscombe said.

Mr. O'Leary drew a glass of the foaming beverage and thrust it under his customer's nose.

"Pass it around to the boys, Pat, it's my treat." Mr. Lipscombe always had money and never was at all stingy. The saloon proprietor supplied the drinks to every person present. Mr. Lipscombe promptly drew his "weasel skin" and paid for every one. As he put away his well worn purse, he glanced around and noticed Jimmie and the other youths quaffing the drinks he had furnished.

"Hello, there! Say, Pat, you didn't furnish these boys liquor at my expense?" he demanded suddenly.

"O' coorse Oi did. Phat did yees tell me to pass it around fur?" answered O'Leary.

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"But the 'kids,' the d—— 'kids,' what 'a' you got them a-layin' round here, drinkin' an' goin' to the Devil for?" he sternly asked.

"Oh, wa-al, wa-al," Pat replied with a shrug of his shoulders and a shake of his head, "They'se money's as good to me as annybody's!"

"Money h——!" fiercely snapped the old man, "Don't ye know it's again the law? Ain't ye got no respect for the law? Kick 'em out, I say, kick 'em out!"

"Oh, Oi'll not kick the byes out yet awhile, Uncle Joe. Oi'll not take the shingle off me own roof! An' Oi guess they'se no more apt to go to the Divil than ithers Oi could mintion!"

"This beer can't be beat, Pat," Lipscombe again said, suddenly changing the subject, and sipping at his glass with evident satisfaction, "Whose is it?"

"Bedad, it was mine, Uncle Joe, but now it belongs to yees, 'cause yees paid the full pr-ice," returned the proprietor, with some evidence of a slight pique still lurking in his mind.

"Oh, you blamed Dunderhead!" exclaimed Mr. Lipscombe, who was a privileged character and who said anything that pleased him. "I mean who makes this beer?" He finished his glass and passed it up to be refilled.

"Oh," said O'Leary, turning on the faucet, his face becoming softened into the usual look of good humor, "yees mane who makes the beer, Uncle Joe, do yees? Why, it's the gr-reat X & Z, the brand called the Teufelhofer. It took the pr-rize at St. Louis lasht fall."

"I thought so," answered the other with a grunt of satisfaction. "Tastes like the kind I drank in Spain eighty years ago."

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"Do they drink beer in Spain?" ventured one of the youngsters. "I thought it was wine they drank over there." And he tittered over a mug of liquor he had no legal right to have.

"Umph! you thought," replied Mr. Lipscombe with a pitying glance at the boy; "I reckon they do drink beer in Spain. That is, the big bugs do. I was there only three weeks and was the guest o' the king himself the hull time. To tell the truth, I only left the palace—what do they call it?" turning to the boy who had aroused the discussion, who not being up in geography didn't know, "the Mercurial?—twice. Once I slipped out to git a plug o' terbaccar and the other time was to buy a clean collar!"

"When was that, Uncle Joe, that you were in Spain?" another asked.

"About eighty years ago," was the somewhat perplexing answer.

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, ole man," broke in the negro who had come with O'Leary from the city, and who hadn't fully taken up with the peculiarities of the place, "how old was yo' den?"

"About twenty-four," was the imperturbable answer, given with a most complacent countenance.

"An' ef it's a fa'r question, sah, how old is yo' now?"

"One hundred and four if I peg along until the thirteenth o' next Aprile!" The negro stared at the grim old man in astonishment but subsided.

"Phat did yees go to Spain fur?" put in Mr. O'Leary.

"Sold the king a ship load o' mules. Bought 'em over in Missouri at a bargain. Took 'em to Spain as a sort o' venture. Luckiest thing I ever did do. The king had taken a dam fool notion to put his army

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on mule back. Was advertisin' in the daily papers fur mules when I got there. Seemed to think his army couldn't retreat so blamed easy if they was astride an old mule. Had the right idee, too. I took him some that you couldn't make budge if you tied a cannon cracker to their tails! He said—"

"Who said, Uncle Joe? We can't keep up," exclaimed an interested listener.

"Why the king, o' course. The king said they was the finest lot he ever did see. Paid me five hundred the head fur 'em. I sold him five thousand. Got all my money in gold, too."

"But you said you put up at the palace. How did that happen, Uncle Joe? We can't understand how a common plug like you could stay at a palace three weeks!" again asked the same person.

"Common plug, indeed! Do you know, sir, that I come from the best and bluest blood of the South?" The old man, however, did not stop long to waste words with his disparager, but continued: "Wal, after I sold him the mules nothing would do him but that that 'ere army o' his should mount them blamed beasts and parade past the palace the very next day. And ye never see such a sight in all your born days. Some come head first and some tail, and not a few o' those contrary cross-breeds walked on their front legs, with bull-fighters clinging to their backs scared almost to death. Fact if ever I told one, that procession was the hull day passin' the portico where me and the king stood.

"The king like to killed himself laughin' and I am bound to admit that it was the funniest sight I ever saw. He says, 'Mr. Lipscombe, by George! I've accomplished my purpose, ha! ha! ha! The next time the French make a bayonet charge they've got to stay!'"

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"When night come, and the last old, burry mule tail disappeared down the dim visty in the direction o' the royal stables, I says, kind o' genteel-like:

"'Wal, my dear Alfonso, I must away to my huttel. It groweth late.'

"'Not a bit of it, Mr. Lipscombe, not a bit of it! You must abide with me for the eventide has come, and I can't afford to lose sight o' a man who has been so useful to me. You have, sir, enabled me to overcome one of the most serious difficulties that ever faced the army and navy o' Spain!' he said, putting his arm around me. 'You must remain in the palace with me during your hull stay.'

"So I stayed, and had the time o' my life."

"Phat did yees iver do wid all yees money, Uncle Joe?" asked Mr. O'Leary grinning broader than ever.

"I put it in real estate down in Tennessee," Uncle Joe answered between sips. He was now on his fifth glass of beer and had sandwiched a couple of glasses of red-eye between.

"An' phat did yees iver do wid that?" persisted the proprietor with a sly wink at the now semi-maudlin group. "Oi'm tauld yees prisent belongin's really belong to yees wife!" A titter went round, but Mr. Lipscombe was undisturbed.

"Oh, I'll tell ye! A fellow don't usually care to take Tom, Dick and Harry into his private business, but ye see, it was this way: After the war, the state o' Tennessee was damned hard up. They was hell-bent to borry a million dollars. Couldn't pay their bills at all unless they could raise the wind by makin' that big a loan. So they got to figgerin' with some money lenders over in New York to lend 'em the cash. And them fellers over in New York just said they wouldn't lend the state a damn cent unless the Hon-

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orable Joseph B. Lipscombe would go on the bonds. And they put at me to sign 'em. And I was good-hearted and easy, and wanted to help my state out, o' course, and like a blamed fool, I went and signed them bonds and by G—! they made me pay 'em!" Here the old man struck the table with his fist, puffed out his cheeks, and turned his good eye upon Mr. O'Leary with a look of supreme disgust. It brought down the house.

"Too bad! too bad!" sighed Mr. O'Leary, "An' yees had to pay the state's debt did yees, Uncle Joe?"

"Had to pay the state's debt!" repeated the old man with a far-away look in his eye. Even his beer had lost its flavor. But he managed to continue:

"And after I paid them bonds it made me so infernal mad, that I sold out everything and come away!"

"Yis, yis," commiserated Mr. O'Leary, "An' had to put phat little yees had left in yees wife's name! Oi kin see wher-r yees war right!"

"Put my property in my wife's name! O' course I did. When a great state like the state o' Tennessee digs a feller up, I'd like to know who ye could trust!"

The only serious face present was that belonging to Joseph B. Lipscombe. All the others were red with laughter.

"Byes, yees kin jist take annythin' yees want at me expinse, an' they'se no 'kick' a-comin'. Whin Oi'm done Oi'm did! Oi t'ought Oi could lie a little, but me shingle's all down now, byes. Yees Uncle Joseph takes the hull bake shop!" Everybody shouted and drank but Mr. Lipscombe, who sat in moody silence.

Beer and stronger beverages had been flowing freely and all had been drinking to excess. Jimmie Godwin, being the youngest and the least accustomed

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to deep potations, was rapidly becoming the most intoxicated. His actions, the thickness of his tongue and his ridiculous and grotesque utterances were beginning to attract attention. Since the prevaricating volcano had ceased to erupt, the crowd was very much disposed to be amused at Jimmie's condition.

"Hello, Jim, yees may take anither wan on me" said O'Leary, slyly winking at the other occupants of the room, at the same time drawing a glass of beer and pushing it under the lad's nose.

"A'righ, Pat, o' boy, you're goo' fellow!" responded Jimmie with a heavy tongue.

"Godwin's no good!" said one of the loafers, a blotch-faced, red-nosed, old sinner, who had been "cured" of the alcoholic habit at least three times by popular subscription, but had returned, like the sow, to his wallow again. "Godwin's no good!" he repeated, shaking his head with an air of infinite contempt, and returning O'Leary's wink. "Why, if he but smells the counter rag, it'll make 'im drunk! Pat, don't ye let 'im smell it any more, or ye'll have to carry the durn kid home to his mammie!"

"You're liar, dam liar!" promptly responded the lad, leaping to his feet, and making a lunge at his tormenter. The latter, though decidedly unsteady on his pegs, dodged around a chair, which the boy fell over, and the assembled hosts roared with delight.

"A fight! a fight!" they shouted with drunken glee.

The boy was quickly on his feet, and before any one could interfere, had they been so disposed, he had leaped upon the older man and was kicking and fighting like a demon. The two went down together, the youth on top, with one hand clasped tightly in his victim's hair, and beating him in the face with the

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other until the blood was flowing from nose and mouth.

The drunken crowd formed a circle around the combatants, and cheered until the windows rattled. O'Leary, who had the faculty of always drinking and hardly ever becoming drunk, could see at once that this terrific uproar was likely to arouse the town. He, therefore, came from behind his counter, seized Jimmie by the nape of the neck, tore him from the object of his ire, and set him on his feet.

"There now, Jimmie, yees 'ave given the poor-auld plug all thot's a comin' to him, an' more too! Lave 'im be, now lave 'im be! Yees'll have the hool domned town at me dhur-re in tin minutes!"

Poor old "Poppy" Lester, that was his name, struggled to his feet, the gore dyeing his tobacco-stained shirt a bright red. He hadn't had enough. His fighting instinct was aroused. He had no more than regained a standing position, until he attempted to push around the burly form of Mr. O'Leary in order to get at the youth.

"Naw yeess don't, Poppy, naw yeess don't! Why, domn yeess auld sowl, yeess 'ave been pounded into a jelly now, an' yet yeess be wantin' to fight!"

The sight of the blood stirred up the enthusiasm of the spectators.

"Let 'em take it again, Pat. The ole man never ain't had no show! Give 'im a chance to git even. Godwin's only got first blood! Let'er be a fight to a finish, Pat!"

O'Leary knew better than to permit any longer such a serious tumult. The danger was not alone in the uproar, but the members of a drunken mob like the one before him were liable to take sides, and then there would be a "free-for-all-fight!"

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"Byes, byes!" he shouted. "Kape still, kape still, Oi tell yees!" And he pushed right and left. "Jimmie, not anither wor-rd. An' 'Poppy,' domn yees, sit down ther-re!" pushing the latter toward a chair beside the table. Poppy staggered back, at the same time putting an old bandana handkerchief to his bloody face. When he saw the blood, his own blood, for the first time in twenty years he became sorry for himself and began to sob and cry in a truly maudlin manner. The delight of the crowd was immeasurable. He blubbered and tried to talk, and they howled. Suddenly the demon of fight returned. He leaped from the chair into which he had been pushed, seized from the table a heavy beer glass, the awful weapon of the grog-shop brawl, and before any one could interfere or stay his hand, he hurled it at the handsome face of the boy. It struck the lad with crushing, sickening force. The glass flew into fragments, but oh, how it tore and lacerated the fair features of the lad! Jimmie trembled in every limb, and sank upon the floor unconscious, while the blood gushed from his wounded features in torrents.

Joseph B. Lipscombe, who had remained an excited witness to this scene suddenly exclaimed:

"Patrick O'Leary, ye ort to be ashamed o' yer-self. This is your damnable doin's! Ye know ye had no right to sell that boy liquor nor to permit him to loaf 'round yer damned little 'doggery.' No wonder the people air agin ye! Ye ort to be tarred an' feathered, an' rid on a fence rail out o' town!"

"Phat in the h——l is it to yees, annyhow, Lipscombe? Ar-re yees mad at me because Oi wouldn't belave the domned lies yees 'ave been tellin' all the avenin'? Didn't Oi try to save the bye, an' phat did yees do, yees domned auld spalpeen, all the while?"

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The whole crowd began to hoot and yell in such a way that the old man could not be heard. Some were standing on chairs, others on the table, and pandemonium reigned, while the wind outside howled in chorus. O'Leary leaned over and gazed upon the boy's bloody face. The situation for him was becoming serious. It was a wonder that the noise inside the saloon had not aroused the officers, but the storm had increased; the night was advancing and the streets were deserted. One thing was certain, something had to be done with the wounded boy. He must receive attention and that at once. The crowd around him at last became more quiet. O'Leary knelt beside the lad and felt his pulse. He was still unconscious, partly from intoxication, and partly from the blow.

"Phat'll Oi do wid the domned 'kid?' he asked, looking around at the faces of his attendants.

"I'd send fur a doctor, O'Leary, at onct, if I was you!" suggested old man Lipscombe.

"Oi'll be domned if Oi do, Lipscombe," he replied, "an' have the fanatics on me shouldhersh wid a sure-enough case. Naw, naw, Oi'll not do thot. Oi'll sind him home an' let his pable look afther him!"

They were all now ready to help. A shutter was obtained from one of the rear windows, and four stalwart toughs started home with the unconscious and bleeding lad. It was night-fall. After they were gone, O'Leary said to those who remained:

"Byes, Oi've been purty domned good to all av yees, an' if anny tr-rouble coomes out av this Oi want yees all to stand by me, an' swear-r me clear-r."

"All right, Pat," they all answered with one exception, old man Lipscombe.

"Phat do yees say, auld man?" O'Leary asked.

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"I only promise one thing, Pat. I ain't a durned bit proud o' bein' here, not a durned bit. If the officers don't never find out I've been in this crowd, I ain't never a-goin' to tell 'em! You kin bet yer life on that! But, mind ye, O'Leary, I ain't stuck on yer way o' doin' business any too well, and if they force me on the witness stand, I'm a-goin' to tell the truth! D'ye hear?"

"Oi know yees be gr-reat f'r tellin' the truth!" grinned O'Leary.

CHAPTER VI.

THE choir of the Presbyterian church of Quarrytown met for a mid-week practice on Thursday night, in the residences of its members. On the night when the events described in the last chapter were transpiring, the choir had taken up its burden of song at the cottage home of Nellie Godwin, and, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, there was scarcely a member absent.

After the practice had gone on for some time, above the music and the roar of the wind there was heard a ringing of the door bell. Nellie Godwin, who was presiding at the piano, sprang to her feet with a cry of alarm, while her mother, also very much startled, ran to the front door. Nellie immediately followed, leaving the inner opening into the hall ajar. Mrs. Godwin fumbled nervously at the door knob. When the oaken panel swung inward, four men filed into the hall bearing upon a stretcher a fifth form. The terror-stricken mother screamed and leaped backward. Then seeing that it was her own boy lying helpless and bloody before her, she threw herself beside him and wailed in agonized tones:

"Oh, my God! it's Jimmie, it's Jimmie!" Then quickly kneeling beside him, and taking his head upon her knees, she continued in those tender mother tones, the memory of which comes back to us from childhood: "Oh, my little boy, my little boy! Won't you speak to me? Tell me, darling, what is the matter?"

The choir forgot propriety and everything else, and swarmed around the principals in this exciting scene. Dr. Beggs, bass singer, fortunately was present. He kneeled beside the widow, examined the boy's

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wound and caught a whiff of his beer-laden breath. All faces were now turned toward the doctor.

"Oh, doctor!" the terrified mother cried, "tell me how seriously hurt is my poor, little boy."

The physician turned to ask the men concerning the accident, but they had improved the opportunity to sneak away. He arose and looked around with a queer expression upon his face. What made him so loth to answer the mother's question?

"Mrs. Godwin," at last he said, "give yourself no serious alarm. Your son's not dangerously hurt, though he may carry a scar or two to his grave. The wound, in my opinion, is not the most serious thing that ails him."

"Oh, doctor, what is it, then? I must know! Oh, please tell me!"

The doctor shrugged his shoulders and hesitated. Perhaps she ought to know, he reasoned. Such a thing as this happening in a community the size of Quarrytown could not be kept secret.

"Well, Mrs. Godwin, I regret to tell you," he said, "but I suppose you will know. Your son's intoxicated, badly intoxicated. He has, doubtless, been spending an evening at that miserable little saloon, and this is the result."

It was pitiable to see the mother and daughter weep over the prostrate form of their loved one, and there was, indeed, scarcely a dry eye, while the doctor took a few necessary stitches in the wound. Such a condition was a new experience to mother and daughter. However worthless and contemptible the boy may have been in the eyes of O'Leary and his retainers, he was infinitely precious and adorable to these two. No sin, no disgrace, no downfall could ever mar the beauty of those features in their eyes. And

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thus it is, that Satan after he has wrecked a human soul, cares no more than a straw for it. And, on the other hand, thus it is that no evil doing, no perverseness, no rebellion, can ever separate us from the tender mercy of Him who doeth all things well, whose very name is Love.

Poor Nell, she felt keenly the terrible disgrace that had overtaken her brother. It seemed so awful that the disclosure had to take place before her cherished and most respectable friends. But the kind-hearted ladies and gentlemen who composed the choir thronged around her with genuine friendship and sympathy, and she was more than half reassured before they had taken their departure.

But down deep in the mother's heart, there was even a keener wound than that. She remembered her sad and deserted condition, and the bitter poverty that had forced her brave, little boy out into the world to toil for her. She thought of the many times during the past years when her sensitive boy had come home sad and discouraged. How cheerfully he had shared with her his every dollar, and she—cruel condition—had been compelled to use the labor of those childish hands in order to keep the wolf from the door! door! Even the burden of the sister's education had rested upon those childish shoulders, and how well had he carried it! And now, in this hour of sad disgrace she wept bitterly when she thought of all these things, but she loved him better than ever.

The next morning the lad was deeply repentant and heart-broken, and in that frame of mind he told his mother all that had happened, so far as he could remember. Mr. O'Leary was promptly arrested upon the affidavit and information furnished by Mrs. Godwin, and with Poppy Lester, brought before the local

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magistrate. But the saloon man took a change of venue and the case went to an adjoining township where the people were more "liberal." When the day set for the trial arrived, the saloon man came into court with ten or fifteen of the loafers and proved by them that the Godwin boy had never been scld, nor had he drunk one drop of intoxicating liquer in Mr. O'Leary's place, and Pat, therefore, went free.

CHAPTER VII.

IT WAS a Sunday afternoon during the holidays. Editor Howe, according to his custom, was calmly proceeding on his way to Sabbath school. He wore upon his face that good, substantial, go-to-meeting-on-Sunday look, and very properly, too, for he scarcely missed a service. He had reached that stage in Christian development wherein he was disposed to notice every lounge who was not going to church and draw invidious comparisons in his mind between himself and them, and like a certain citizen to whom our Savior called attention many years ago, was very prone to thank his God that he was not as they are.

On this Sabbath day he noticed four country boys whom he well knew. They were the sons of well-to-do farmers, living in neighboring homes south of the village. These sons were bright, industrious young men, but, like many of a corresponding age, they were inclined to be a little wild, and were out, Sunday though it was, for a "time." Their fathers, being in affluent circumstances, the boys were always supplied with spending money, and, having horses and vehicles at their command, they could go wherever they desired, especially on Sunday. Their names were Charles and Robert Lawler and Samuel and William Holmes.

As Mr. Howe passed them he spoke to them. Something in their manner or appearance impressed him and he was moved to address them farther.

"Boys," he said, "come with me to Sunday school." It was an old, hackneyed invitation, to be sure, and he felt somewhat belittled in giving it. "I am cer-

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tain you will enjoy the lesson today. It is a beautiful Christmas lesson, on the birth of our Savior."

This invitation must have struck the young men, too, as being out of date. Their looks plainly said: "Mind your own business!"

"Thank you, Mr. Howe, for your kind invitation," said one of the boys with an impudent grin, though making an effort to appear courteous. "but we're not going today. That's too slow for us. Christmas comes but once a year, you know."

They had not ransacked the town to any very great extent before they ascertained that the rear door leading into Mr. O'Leary's place of business was unlocked, and, upon further investigation, they discovered that gentleman and two other choice spirits seated at a table therein, laughing and drinking. The latch string, figuratively speaking, was hanging out, and these four venturesome country boys raised the latch and walked in. The proprietor, who quickly noted their kind and quality, beamed upon them his most encouraging smile of welcome. Here was a group of young fellows well worth his time and attention.

"Mr. O'Leary," said Robert Lawler, approaching the liquor dealer with deference and respect, his manner being directly opposite to that he had shown in answering the kind invitation of Mr. Howe, "can we get anything to drink today? We want something quick and devilish, you know!"

There never was an eloquent address pronounced by orator that met such hearty, instant and complete approval. Mr. O'Leary's countenance beamed like a full-blown sunflower.

"Sure yees kin, me byes, sure yees kin, if yees will plaze to close me back dhure, an' promise be the

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Holy Moses that yees'll niver say wan wor-rd about it to anny man!" Pat still grinned as he administered the oath. He was pretty sure of these boys without that, however, for they were of such a respectable sort that they would hardly place upon themselves so great a disgrace as to admit visiting the saloon.

"You bet we'll promise that, Mr. O'Leary," said one of them, pushing the door shut. Once inside, and the door closed, the windows being frosted, they felt entirely at ease. They might put in the remainder of the day in O'Leary's place, secure from the public gaze. The two persons in the room besides O'Leary when the boys entered, were Joseph B. Lipscombe and a red-nosed hanger-on, called "Buddy" Littleton. The old man was none too fond of the saloonist, as has been suggested—which sentiment the latter returned in kind—but he did love to partake of Pat's goods. As soon as the boys came in he lapsed into a moody silence and frowned savagely. The four seated themselves at a table beside a comfortable fire.

"Now, me br-rave la-ads, phat'll yees be after dr-rinkin'?" smilingly inquired the proprietor.

They began a glass of beer each, and generously asked Mr. O'Leary and his two companions to partake of the same beverage with them. The proprietor quickly drew seven glasses and supplied every one present, including himself. Mr. Lipscombe left his entirely untouched, which action, noticed by the saloon man, appeared to nettle him.

"Begorra!" said the genial proprietor. "We'se ought to have a song or a story or something like that. Uncle Joe, couldn't yees tell us wan av yees big lies this avenin'? Oi'm sure the byes niver hear-rd anny-thing like thim!"

"To what do you refer, sir?" demanded Mr. Lips-



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"NOW, ME ER RAVE LA-ADS, PHAT'LE YE BE AETHER DR-RINKIN'?"

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combe, with much dignity. "To what do you refer, sir, when you speak of one of my lies? Do you venture to insinuate that I lie?" Uncle Joe was becoming spunky, and inclined to talk back under the rough, coarse taunts of the whisky seller.

"Oh, phat ar-re yees givin' me, auld man? Don't yees know that Oi know that yees ar-re the domdest, biggest liar in Blackwood county, and ar-re so considered be all yees neighbors!"

This was pretty raw for the old man to stand, and he, evidently, didn't relish it very much.

"Me a liar!" he demanded, "me a liar! Why, I never told a lie in my whole life!" This he said so seriously and with such an expression of absolute earnestness that every person present stared at him, wondering if he really did mean to give utterance to such a paradoxical statement. O'Leary burst into a loud guffaw.

"Now, that's the biggest wan av anny," he roared, "if yees had put in the hull day cudglin' yees auld head yees couldn't a tauld a gr-reater wan than that!"

"Be that as it may," grimly responded the ancient worthy, "if I **should** lie, which I don't admit, there's **some** things I don't do! I don't lead children to their ruin in order to make a few dimes off of them!"

With this parting shot, which evidently landed fairly and squarely on the vulnerable hulk of Patrick, the old man indignantly withdrew from the room.

The country boys began their potations with beer. The liquor dealer had had a world of experience, and knew well enough how to nurse a good thing along. He kept the boys from becoming intoxicated too quickly by using his smallest glasses and putting in as much foam as possible. The lads never detected the fraud that was being perpetrated upon them and it was,

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perhaps, one of those instances in which one might receive a positive benefit from the tort of another. Pat supplied himself and "Buddy," for the boys ordered the drinks all around every time, with larger glasses, containing more of the amber liquid.

In three or four hours the boys had each drunk twelve glasses of beer, four of whisky, and a couple of a specially recommended decoction which Pat was pleased to denominate "auld Port." The wily saloonist had shrewdly kept them on beer until toward the last of the debauch, for he knew that the mixing of the drinks would soon produce complete intoxication. In the time that has been mentioned, therefore, the boys, collectively, had consumed fifty-two mugs of beer, at five cents a mug; twelve glasses of whisky at ten cents a glass, and eight of "auld Port," at fifteen cents. It was even better than that. Each time the generous young bloods had drunk, they insisted that Patrick and "Buddy" should "smile" with them. And Pat was thus doubly benefited. He had the liquor under his belt to cheer the inward man, and he had received pay for every glass that he had himself quaffed, making a magnificent total of one dollar and twenty-five cents. To sum up all the items on Mr. O'Leary's side of the ledger, he had netted in all the princely aggregate of seven dollars and fifty cents, which he regarded as quite a satisfactory showing for a dull Sabbath afternoon!

It grew late enough for the night services of the churches to begin, and O'Leary knew that the streets would soon be full of people going thither. Of course, the young farmer boys had grown drunken and noisy. Such a clamor on the inside of the saloon would arouse too much attention and precipitate too much inquiry on the part of the churchgoers who would

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soon be passing. As the proprietor well knew, it was a direct and flagrant violation of the law for him to open up and sell on Sunday. So he resolved to do what men in his business usually do: After getting folks half-crazed with drink they turn them loose, not only upon society, but upon helpless, unoffending women or children to receive the harsh words and cruel blows of the dangerous dipsomaniacs!

"Now, me br-rave la-ads," said the glavering saloonist, after the last glass of "auld Port," had disappeared down his bottomless gullet, "yees be foine comp'ny, indade yees be! Oi could asily pass the ento'ire avenin' alongside av such foine young gintlemin, but——" he continued, hurriedly glancing at his watch, "but Oi moost be gittin' down to me avenin' repasht. Yees plaze step out a shor-rt toime until Oi kin coom back!"

With much clatter and objection the country boys were turned out, but Mr. O'Leary, glad to rid himself of such an embarrassing, noisy and disagreeable crowd, glided away into the inky darkness down an alley in the district of his boarding place, which was at the home of one of his retainers in the outskirts of the town. Others must now bear the burdens he had imposed; face the dangers he had caused to impend; suffer the wounds and sorrows for which he had given occasion!

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN Patrick O'Leary closed his saloon, thus turning adrift the four intoxicated country boys, the hands on the face of the town clock pointed to the hour of seven, and it was as dark as it is possible at any time to become. The few lamps on the street corners, struggling for existence in the high wind that had arisen, served only to make the darkness visible, as it were. The boys started out to "paint the town red," yelling and cursing. One of them, Robert Lawler, had a revolver, and he opened fire on every conspicuous object which the fitful lights revealed. One of his reckless, random bullets broke the big plate glass in the front of the hardware store, and just then the town marshal and his deputy put in their appearance. They undertook to arrest the four young men and a lively battle ensued. The boys were soon brought under subjection and safely handcuffed, except Robert, the youngest of the four. He was absolutely wild, and would have shot the marshal dead, for he leveled the revolver full at the officer's breast and snapped it repeatedly. Fortunately, he had previously emptied every chamber. He resisted arrest, fighting like a demon, using his revolver in lieu of a club. The marshal was compelled to use his mace, and in the excitement of the moment, and, perhaps, in fear of the gun, he struck the boy several crushing blows upon the face and head, cutting through to the very bone and making wounds from which he bled profusely. When Robert had been overpowered, not conquered, the four were taken into the light. There the faithful officer saw who his prisoners were and was completely discomfited at the discovery, for

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they were members of two of the best families in that part of the country, and had never been known to be in trouble before. He was especially heart sick at the condition of young Robert Lawler, for he was covered with blood and was wilder than ever. Of course, Mr. Woods would not put such young men as they were in jail. He respected their parents far too much to do that.

The open air and the bracing wind was beginning to have a sobering effect upon all the boys save Robert, and they appeared to be in a condition sufficiently rational to be permitted to go home. Their buggies were brought up by some of the citizens, and the boys were duly admonished by the marshal never to repeat such a performance as that night had witnessed. Robert was still wild and threatening. The deputy and two citizens had never loosed their hold upon him. He kicked and struggled like a demon, and never ceased saying:

"Let me go! D—n you, let me go! I want to kill him!"

The marshal was in a quandary. What should he do with the frantic boy? At last he sent for Dr. Beggs, who soon came to the lighted town hall and fire engine house combined where the boys were being detained, the doctor having been called from the church. He was accompanied by Mr. Howe. The latter looked ruefully upon the four young men, especially Robbie, who had declared the Sunday school was too slow for him! He had struck something faster, that much was certain, but the question now was, could the poor boy stand the pace?

"Robbie!" said the young editor, his heart going out in pity toward the wounded lad, who was evidently badly hurt, "Robbie, please be quiet and let the doctor attend to your wounds!"

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"I won't, I won't!" raved the poor fellow, lunging and kicking in a frightful manner at Mr. Woods. "I won't be quiet, d—n him! He beat my head into a jelly, and I mean to kill him!"

"I assure you, Mr. Howe," said the marshal, apologetically, "I did not intend to beat him up so badly, but you see, Mr. Howe, it was quite dark and I did not recognize him, and besides, he had a revolver and kept snapping it in my very face. I thought my life was worth at least as much as his and I used my mace with all my power."

Dr. Beggs tried to examine the wounds which the marshal's weapon had produced, but the boy was so frantic and struggled so viciously that it was impossible.

"Mr. Woods, are you going to send him home?" the doctor asked.

"Yes, I thought I would," was the reply.

"The boy is in rather a bad shape to be sent home, but, perhaps, it is after all the best place for him," suggested the physician.

"I know he's in bad shape, doc; but I can't put him in jail to remain over night by himself."

The jail was a little, one-room affair, with neither keeper nor attendants.

"No, you ought not to put him in jail, at least, not in his present condition," assented the doctor. He might have suggested a hospital had there been any such institution in the village.

"Don't you think he is just fearfully angry at me for striking him, and that he will probably subside when I am out of his sight?" queried the anxious Mr. Woods.

"Oh, it's probable that he **may** subside by and by, and, it might be, somewhat sooner if you were not near him," returned the physician, "but I regard his

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condition as serious. His folks, especially his mother, might be able to do more for him than anybody else. His ailments are both mental and physical, and as he is now, I hardly think it worth while attempting either medication or a hypodermic. I don't believe he would attempt to harm his own folks; for all his frenzy is directed towards you."

"Don't you consider his condition an unusual one?" asked Mr. Howe. "He appears to be, for the time at least, insane. This delirium was doubtless caused by the blows he has received."

"I am not so sure about that," returned Dr. Beggs. "Intoxication manifests itself in various ways. Oftentimes, it produces insensibility, as you saw the other night, Mr. Howe; again, it causes a very dangerous frenzy. The present case is an example of that. It is likely that the blows he has received have contributed to his severe dementation, at least, we are safe in saying, that they have done him no good. But the history of the case, as I am informed, reveals the fact that he was absolutely wild when the officer first attempted to apprehend him. Oh, I don't know that his condition is unusual," the doctor continued, eyeing the pitiable object before him, hoping, perhaps, that he might quiet down so that he could do something for him. "I suppose he is in about the same condition a man would be who would beat his wife, or kill his baby, and I submit to you that **that's** not unusual!"

The best thing that Marshal Woods could do, as he thought, was done. The lad was loaded into one of the buggies, a task which required four or five men to do, the handcuffs were quickly taken off, and the horses then started rapidly down the road. Charles Lawler and William Holmes were in the front buggy, and Robbie Lawler and Sammy Holmes in the rear one. Sammy was now reasonably sober and the mar-

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shal had requested him to sit in the same vehicle with the frantic boy, to hold him until the horses could cover the short space to the Lawler home.

At every step the animal took, Robbie became more and more unmanageable.

"Let me out, Sammy, let me out! I want to go back and kill him for beating me up this way! Let me out!"

"No, no; Robbie, you must not get out. You must go home now, and wait until in the morning. Then you will know better what to do!" Sammy's voice was full of tenderness and sympathy. But Robbie was desperate and would listen to no reason.

"Let me out, I say let me out! D—n you, let me out!"

"Oh, Charlie," called Sammy a moment later, in a frightened tone, "Stop and come back here just as quick as you can. Robbie's got his knife out and I can't hold him any longer!"

The front buggy was stopped almost instantly, and Robbie's brother Charles came running back. By this time Robbie had gotten out of the rear vehicle and had disappeared in the darkness, going in the direction whence they had come.

"Where is he?" inquired Charles, as soon as he had reached the side of the rear buggy.

"He started back toward Quarrytown as fast as he could go!" explained Sammy.

Charles ran in that direction. It did not take many paces for him to overtake his wounded brother.

"Here, Robbie, come back this instant. You must not go to Quarrytown again tonight. Come back I say!" commanded Charles.

"Let go, I say! D—n you let go! I'll kill you!" screamed Robert, and then were heard sounds of a scuffle, followed by a fearful scream!

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"Oh, my God, Robbie's killed me!"

There was a heavy fall on the hard roadway and all was still! The two Holmes boys left their buggy hurriedly and ran to the place whence the sounds had come. They saw the form of Charles Lawler lying across the highway. They listened eagerly for his breathing, but could hear only a faint gasp once or twice. They felt for his pulse, and detected at first the slightest flutter, which soon ceased entirely. They tried to light a match, but the swift gale extinguished it instantly. They examined his breast and discovered that he was bleeding profusely from a wound in his left side. He was undoubtedly dead! He had been stabbed to the heart by his own brother!

The only thing now left for these sorrow-stricken boys to do was to load the lifeless form of their late comrade into one of the buggies and take it to the Lawler home.

Words cannot depict the sorrow of that father and mother, when the awful news was thus taken home to them. How they wept and moaned over the manly form of their lost boy! Never had the young men witnessed such an exhibition of poignant grief! And they could do nothing but stand by and mingle their tears with those of the stricken family.

Again and again, the mother smoothed back the curls from the cold, white brow, and kissed, oh, so tenderly, the beloved features of her precious boy!

"Oh, my boy, my boy, my blessed boy!" she wailed. Then, clasping her arms around the lifeless form, she laid her tear-stained cheek upon the tranquil bosom that never more would thrill with pleasure or with pain, and gave herself up to such a paroxysm of sobbing that her form shook and quivered like a storm-beaten vessel.

How could she endure this awful stroke? Could

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she bow her head and patiently submit to this most terrible dispensation? There was for a moment rebellion in that broken heart. She dropped upon her knees, throwing her hands aloft, and lifting her streaming eyes to Heaven!

"Oh, God, my father, my refuge, my high tower!" she wailed, "Why, didst Thou send this fearful affliction upon me? I was so happy in my home, a queen among her beloved, and Thou didst envy me my happiness, and take it all away! Oh, God, how couldst Thou do this! Thou didst know I had rather died a thousand times than suffer the awful sorrow of this hour! Oh, my God! my Father!"

The mother's distressed prayer was addressed to Heaven as if beseeching an answer from the Great White Throne.

But the great Father who directs on high was no more responsible for this crime than He was for the murder of the first man whom his brother slew!

"Now, mother!" said the husband, who was beginning to become seriously alarmed at the intense grief shown by the mother, "don't take on like that! It will do no good! Remember, poor Robbie is away somewhere, and needs your help! This poor boy—" here the father almost broke down himself—"will never more on this earth need either our love or care!"

At the mention of the name, "Robbie," the mother leaped from her knees and seized the arm of her husband.

"Yes, yes;" she exclaimed, "Robbie, my baby boy! Oh, father, go at once and find him! He killed his brother—oh, God, how terrible!—but even though he did, we must stand by him and protect him! I cannot lose them both!"

Farmer Lawler, spurred up by the agonizing entreaty of his wife, started at once in search of Robbie,

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accompanied by Sammy Holmes. By the light of a lantern, they were able to find where Charles Lawler had died, noting the pool of blood in the road. Then they started directly toward Quarrytown following the highway. They had scarcely gone two hundred yards when they found Robert lying upon his face in the middle of the wagon way. He had fainted and fallen, probably, from loss of blood. They took the poor boy home, and his wounds were properly dressed. But that night's escapade threw him into a fever, and he lingered between life and death for three or four months. When his mind was fully restored, and he was pronounced out of danger, the violets were blooming on his beloved brother's grave.

The grand jury never indicted Robert for the killing of his brother. But he was destined to suffer through life that which no court nor jury could inflict! Robert Lawler became a prematurely old man, whose hair was white, but not with years! He beheld his cherished mother pine away and die like a broken flower, and he could not help but know that it was his deed that had destroyed her happiness and finally brought her in sorrow to her grave.

A few years later the author stood by and noted the solemn cortege that bore the father's remains to the narrow cell beside the wife's, and in the foremost carriage that followed behind the black funeral car, he caught for one moment a glimpse of the features of Robert Lawler, and it was the saddest face he had ever seen.

Merciful Father! thou hast all power! Canst thou, oh, canst thou, indeed, restore once more these broken vessels? Canst thou wipe away all tears? Canst thou blot these seated sorrows from the heart? The answer comes back from the crystal battlements of Heaven, sweeter than all the music of song and harp:

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“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death; neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain!”

O’Leary was promptly arrested and the trial held. The Holmes boys did not know him very well, never having seen him before that fateful day. Their evidence, therefore, was not as positive as it might have been. O’Leary brought from the city ten or twelve persons, one a policeman, another a fireman, and others his relatives, and proved beyond question that on that particular Sunday he was in the metropolis, at the home of one of his sisters, enjoying a birthday dinner!

CHAPTER IX.

ONE winter evening sometime later Mr. Patrick O'Leary stood behind his polished mahogany bar. The day's business had been fairly remunerative, and quite a number of the thirsty had been supplied, but now, a lull in the tide had been reached, it would seem, and Patrick had an opportunity of leaning against the sideboard behind the bar, and contemplating his own superb personality alone. As he stood thus agreeably occupied, the front door of his saloon opened slowly, and apparently with caution, a very large head, set upon a pair of broad shoulders, was thrust into the room. On this same head was a badly worn slouch hat. The hair that straggled out from underneath the edges of the hat was black and curly. The face, plainly visible as its owner craned his neck around the paneled screen before the door, was evidently that of a mulatto.

As soon as the visitor's eyes alighted upon the portly form of the proprietor of the dram-shop, the head and shoulders were quickly withdrawn, and Mr. O'Leary heard a voice outside say: "All right, boys, he's heah; come on in."

One standing where the saloonkeeper stood could have easily glanced out of the window at the forward end of the bar, and had he done so he could have seen, at the very edge of the sidewalk, in front of the saloon, a rickety old spring wagon, hitched behind a scrawny, yellow horse, the latter with a huge knot on its left fore leg. Perched high upon the seat of the wagon were a dilapidated looking white man and an under sized, intensely black negro.

No sooner had the words been uttered, than the

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white man and the negro leaped to the sidewalk, and came at once to Mr. O'Leary's door. A moment later they were cordially shaking hands with the proprietor himself over the bar. O'Leary, however, as soon as first salutations were over, slipped to the window and pulled the big green blind, bearing the legend, "Pat's Place" until its lower edge came beneath the top of the frosted panes. No one could have seen into the lighted room, anyway, without being very tall and standing tiptoe beside, but Mr. O'Leary proposed to take no chances whatever.

Then he quickly drew three glasses of beer. Opening the door leading into the smaller rear room, he entered and placed the glasses upon a small table. Then taking up an iron poker, he stirred the fire in a small, open front stove, and put in a bucket of coal. "Come in here, byes," he said.

This invitation was accepted. In fact, his guests would have followed those glasses of beer with as much zeal as pigs would have followed a man with a pail of swill. The white man and his dusky companions were soon seated around the table surveying the ceiling through the bottom of their glasses. It was a brief survey, however, for each glass was almost instantly drained to the very dregs. Pat was gracious enough to refill the schooners, and the contents of each immediately met the fate of its predecessor. Mr. O'Leary shrugged his shoulders as he noticed again the empty glasses, but he said, good humoredly: "Bedad, yees moost a been atein' salt fish, yees be so onusal thir-rsty."

Nevertheless, he filled a third time the huge glasses. Then closing the door between the rooms, and leaving his guests to themselves, he returned to his former position behind the bar. As soon as his bartender came in from his supper, however, Pat left

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him to take care of the night's business, and rejoined the ill-assorted trio.

"So, Bilhod, yees moost a got the letter Oi wrote yees?" he said addressing the raveled-out, run-down-at-the-heel white man.

"Yes, Pat, we got yer letter ail right, an' we've come prepared to do the job. But yer mistaken 'bout what we git fur a 'stiff.' It made the boys larf like h—l when I tole 'em that you thought we git as much as two ur three hund'erd. The best we kin do at any time is two hund'erd fur a well-preserved spec'ment. Sometimes we don't git more'n seventy-five fur a pore ole 'duffer' that's gone off with some wastin' sickness. 'Bout the only thing o' any value in sich as that is the skelickton, an that's got to be boiled out an' worked over like ever'thing before ye can realize on it!"

It was evident that the white man was not bringing Mr. O'Leary along with him as he desired. The frown on his face showed that arrangements were not as pleasing as they might be. The speaker continued:

"Ef we could slide out tonight an' snatch two good bodies, an' ye'd go along with us, Pat, an' show us the way, we wouldn't a-mind a givin' ye, say fifty apiece. What say, ole feller?"

"Wa-al, wa-al," said Patrick, "is that the best yees kin do!"

"That's the best we kin do, 'pon honor, Pat," was the reply.

"Wa-al, then, yees kin joost climb into yees domned auld rattlet-rap an' go long wid yees! If Oi'd a known that was all yees would do, domned if Oi'd a tauld yees anny'ting about the aisy snap yees could have be comin' down here."

"Come, now, Pat, don't be onrasonable. Ye see

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we don't engage in the onpop'lar an' onhealthy business o' body-snatchin' altewgether fur our health, nuther. In fact, tain't healthy. The other night at Teatherwood Cemetery, some watchers fired six shots full an' fair at us. I was the only one touched. See this ear?"

With that he leaned toward Mr. O'Leary and exhibited a grimy lug, the top of which had been neatly snipped off by a flying bullet.

"Wa-al," responded the saloon man, with a broad grin, "yees domned auld ear-r's too long annyhow!" Pat, like many a rough man, had his keenest sense of humor aroused at seeing some one hurt or discomfited.

"Tubby sure, Pat, tubby sure!" replied the white man, glad to see the liquor man veering around, even if it were caused by witnessing the evidences of his own misfortune, and he followed up the advantage by continuing: "Ye see a hund-erd fur jist one night's work is purty blamed good. You kin jist go 'long an' show us how to git in an' out, whar to dig, an' we'll do the rest. That's all we ast. An' you bet ye'll git yer 'dough'."

"Oh, wa-al thin, Oi'll go along wid yees annyway."

"Good fur you, ole boy!" exclaimed the trio in a breath.

"Now, fellers," said the exultant white man, "jist take any ole thing ye please on me. I don't keer whutther it's a ten cent drink ur a five cent drink!" And he drew his pocketbook which evidently suffered from the chronic ailment of being empty or nearly so. This time everybody took whisky, and well-filled glasses at that. Patrick, having supplied the drinks, seated himself at the table once more with a glass of the latter beverage before him, while the white man

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fished out the nickels and dimes necessary to pay the bill.

"How fah is it to thuh cemetery?" asked the big mulatto.

"It's no more but half a moile," replied O'Leary.

"Do thah keep any gua'ds around, o' keep thuh gates locked?"

Pat laughed derisively.

"Oi niver see anny guar-rds f'r anny institootion 'round here. Theyse niver been bothered mooch by anny sich as yees. If theyse not be guar-rdin' the livin', sure t'ing theyse not wastin' anny toime on the dead! Oi don't t'ink the cemetery pable lock the smaller gates. But thin, yees better kape away from the gates. Yees kin drive yees auld plug into Looney's woods paslture, an' climb over the fince over at the wist side."

"What sort of a fence is it?" was asked.

"A picket fence about siven fate high. Yees kin dhrive yees auld wagon up on wan side av the fence, and drop yees high sate on 'tither side. Thin yees kin aisly climb in and out. And the big trees around will kape yees in the dar-rk."

"Pat, ye've studded out the hull, blamed business," laughed the white man. "Ye ort to come an' jine us fur good!"

Mr. O'Leary was disgusted beyond measure, and he spat into the open fire.

"Not on yees loife, Bilhod, not on yees loife. Oi'd rayther be a spittoon cleaner or anny domned t'ing yees kin mintion, than to make me livin' snatchin' poor dead pable out av their shrouds and their cof-fins like yees domned ornary divils do! Oi'll go wid yees annyhow, Bilhod, so yees naden't try to flatther me be tellin' me Oi ought to join yees domned ornary thrade!"

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"Wal, then, Patrick, with you to guide us we'll be 'Johnny on the spot' an' away before they git well acquainted with us. It's more'n likely they'll never know that they've been visited by sich gentry as we uns, gentry that even Pat O'Leary looks down upon, ha, ha, ha!"

The white man's potations were beginning to put some repartee into his hitherto humble conversation.

"Pat, he preys on the livin', bedad, an' we preys on the dead! An' the Devil'll git both sure as you're born; but I'd rather face the Last Day with my record than Pat's, ha, ha, ha!"

With this remark he nudged the negro at his right, and the latter suddenly exploded with a vociferous, "Huh, huh, huh!" and then quickly suppressed himself and looked demurely upon the floor. But the white man continued more circumspectly:

"An' ye see, Pat, the ones we take with us, **they**'ll never give ye away nur bring yer name in bad **repute**, 'cause the're dead sure never to say a word about it." The negro and the mulatto felt free to laugh at this grewsome flash of wit. It was probably one of the standard jokes of the profession.

Mr. O'Leary grinned a sickly and unpleasurable grin at this sally. Suddenly he said, as if desiring to change the subject:

"Byes, take anither wan on me!"

CHAPTER X.

ON THE night wherein occurred the visit of Mr. O'Leary's uncouth friends from the city, the choir of the Presbyterian church of Quarrytown had made arrangements to take a little jaunt over to Pleasant View, five miles distant. There were sixteen members of that organization and they all wanted to go. The most of them were to be transported in a hack, that carried an even dozen, but there were others who had reasons of their own for making different arrangements.

There was young Felix Baumgart for instance. He was the basso profundo of the organization and was one of those who declined to ride in a common hack. He was the son of a wealthy farmer of German descent. Though an industrious worker on his father's farm he usually managed to have a good time, and was never short of spending money. He had received good home training, however, and had joined the choir, some were bold enough to think, because Miss Bertha Woods, a charming alto, was a faithful member thereof. She was a resident of the country, too, and her father lived on a farm adjoining that of the Baumgarts.

"I don't like this here hack business a little bit," said Felix, coming into the Augur office with characteristic suddenness that afternoon. "Looks too cheap to suit me. I'll tell you what I'll do, Ezra, I'll take Dad's new carriage, it's a daisy too, and hitch up the roans, and we'll take Miss Leonard and Miss Woods over to Pleasant View in some sort o' style."

Mr. Howe was sure it would be simply delightful.

"But—but," he stammered, "I haven't secured

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Miss Leonard's consent yet, and I—I'm afraid I won't have time to do so be—be—"

"Oh, that's all right," said Felix, interrupting him, "you can secure her consent without any trouble. She thinks you are just the proper caper, but you'll have trouble with old Doc yet, and don't you forget it! I've the carriage and the roans in town with me this afternoon—getting them shod. Miss Leonard's out at Bertha's right now, spending the day. You get ready and we'll drive out there. Take supper with Farmer Woods. He's a jolly old soul, and thinks a lot of me. I'm afraid I have got a better 'stand in' with him than I have with 'Bert.' After supper we'll drive right back through Quarrytown, and on to Pleasant View with our young lady friends. How does that plan suit you?"

Ezra was ready in less than twenty minutes, and the young men were soon seated in the Baumgart carriage, speeding along the highway at a merry clip, leaving the village behind them.

So they went to Pleasant View according to plans previously formed. After the function at the church had terminated in "a blaze of glory" as the enthusiastic leader, Prof. Schumann, declared, the choral society from Quarrytown was invited to the home of one of the members, where it was regaled with some refreshments, and where in turn the choir rendered some more musical numbers. It was, therefore, approaching the keystone hour of the night when they all prepared to take their departure homeward.

The four persons in whom the interest of our story is most deeply concerned for the present, were soon ensconced in the new carriage, Ezra and Miss Leonard occupying the rear seat, while Felix and Miss Woods had taken possession of the front one. The route selected for the return was somewhat longer

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than the more direct one the hack would take. Neither route, however, was a very long drive, in fact, hardly as long as the four would have preferred, late as it was. It would be a pleasant journey, long or short. The air was a trifle chilly, it was true, and the moon more or less obscured by clouds, but there was no discomfort.

The route Mr. Baumgart had chosen led past the Quarrytown cemetery. This was a beautiful location for a city of the dead, ranging around a gentle hill and extending into a small ravine beyond. Four or five broad graveled ways lined on either side by rows of cedar and arbor vitae extended from the main entrance at the highway out through various parts of the grounds. At the bottom of the small hill near the main gate, there was a small, two-story stone chapel, surmounted by a cupola or belfry. The necropolis through which these drives led was thickly set with shade and ornamental trees. A very large number of white marble monuments shone like sheeted ghosts amidst the trees and shrubbery.

As the carriage approached the solemn spot, the horses, as if from a sense of reverence, checked their pace, and the conversation which had been lively and continuous ceased. The vehicle had now reached a spot almost directly opposite to the big gate of the main entrance.

"Look! I see a light in the cemetery!" suddenly exclaimed Miss Leonard.

Their attention was turned in that direction, and sure enough, there was a small point of illumination glinting through the foliage from the hollow just beyond the rounded crest of the hill.

"What in the world can it be?" asked Mr. Baumgart, who was a trifle superstitious, as his startled tones indicated.

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"Perhaps it is an **Ignus Fatuus**, sometimes called a will-o'-the-wisp, more commonly called a Jack-o'-lantern," suggested Mr. Howe, desiring, no doubt, to air his scientific knowledge before Miss Aimee. "Such lights are often seen in the vicinity of graveyards. I am told that it is a kind of phosphorescence arising from decaying bones!"

"Àlas! poor Yorick!" began Miss Aimee, quoting Shakespeare so solemnly that the cold chills chased each other down Felix's spine, "Now, get thee to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come! Make her laugh at that!"

"For gracious sake, Aimee!" expostulated Miss Woods, "stop that horrid quotation, it makes me have the 'creeps'!"

"Let's go over and see it!" suddenly exclaimed Miss Aimee.

"You are not in earnest, are you, Miss Aimee?" asked Mr. Baumgart, with a feeling akin to terror. He was afraid she would "start something."

"Yes, indeed, I am!" was the reply. "I have often heard of such ghostly lights leading people astray, away out into dark and dismal swamps or into quagmires. I have many times wondered if there were really anything in such stories save superstition. Now we can ascertain definitely for ourselves."

Mr. Baumgart's teeth chattered. The weather was a trifle chilly. Had there been light enough, he might have detected a roguish twinkle in Miss Leonard's pretty eyes.

"Oh, mercy!" exclaimed Miss Woods, in a frightened whisper, "it might be worse than that! It might be—grave robbers with—with ah-ah-oo! a body!"

Felix almost fell out of the carriage.

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"That's all the more reason why we ought to go over there and see what it really is," chimed in Mr. Howe, ready to second any motion that his fair companion might make, "and if it should be grave robbers, as Miss Woods suggests, we can drive them away!"

Miss Woods would have given any reasonable sum to have withdrawn that suggestion, but it was too late. Mr. Baumgart, though somewhat superstitious, had considerable courage and more pride than courage, and he did not like to show the white feather before the girl he so much admired. If he had but known the condition of Miss Bertha's quaking heart, he could safely have presumed to have acted differently.

"I shouldn't object so very much to going over there," he said with an enforced air of nonchalance, "if we can drive through the big gate. We can come within a stone's throw of that light without getting out of the carriage." Mr. Baumgart was praying inwardly that the big gate might be locked.

The two young men alighted from the carriage and made an examination of the heavy, iron gate. The prayer was answered. The gate was securely locked with heavy padded chain. But the smaller one beside it for pedestrians was unlocked.

"Young ladies," reported Mr. Howe, "the big gate's locked, but we find the smaller one open. You just remain in the carriage and Mr. Baumgart and I will step over and ascertain what that light means."

"Good Heavens," said Felix inwardly again, the cold sweat standing on his brow, "is that the chute he's going to take?"

But his agony was instantly removed to some extent by his companion, Miss Woods.

"No, indeed!" she almost screamed. "You don't leave us out here by ourselves! I'd ten thousand times rather go along."

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"And I **am** going!" said Miss Aimee, slipping from her seat and springing lightly to the ground beside her escort, Mr. Howe. "Do you suppose that I would for anything miss an opportunity for an adventure in a graveyard at the ghost's hour of midnight?"

So they started, Mr. Howe and Miss Leonard in front and the more timorous couple behind. It was five or six hundred yards to the place where the light seemed to be. The young folks departed from the graveled paths and walked directly across toward the light, traversing the soft sod. Consequently, their footfalls made no sound whatever, and they did no talking save in whispers. They were thus able to approach very closely to the light which they now saw was a lantern, the three sides of which were shaded. They could now discern four men at a newly-made grave. Two of them were digging therein and the other two men were standing, one at the head, the other at the foot. The one stationed at the head had something in his hand that resembled, in the light of the lantern, a nickel-plated revolver. The figure at the foot of the grave held the lantern.

Just then the moon reached a rift in the clouds and shone down upon the scene clearly and brightly. The man at the head, whose face was turned toward the approaching couples, saw them at the same instant.

"Oh, the Divil, byes!" he shouted in a hoarse whisper, "Look there!"

The lantern went out, and the two men leaped from the excavation they were making.

"Git out av here —————yees!" yelled the man with the shining object in his hand. There was a flash in their faces and a roar in advance of their skirmish line, one might say, as a leaden mes-



"DID YOU GET HURT, MR. HOWE?"

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senger whistled unpleasantly near Mr. Howe's ear. This was too much for the overwrought nerves of the hinder couple and they fled precipitately.

"Run back to the carriage, Miss Leonard, run!" shouted the editor, "while I see what mischief these ruffians are bent upon!"

Mr. Howe seized a stout club from a pile of limbs (the sexton had been trimming the trees that very day) and sprang toward the man who had fired upon him. Two of his companions likewise drew revolvers, and the young man was greeted by a perfect fusillade of shots as he charged upon the group. The four at the grave did not stand their ground long, but, becoming alarmed at Mr. Howe's determined approach, took to their heels with sudden vigor, leaving their pick and shovel behind them. They were quickly lost to sight down a ravine, and the rattle of a vehicle driven with some speed was heard on the highway on the further side of the cemetery.

"Did you get hurt, Mr. Howe, by one of those dreadful bullets?" he heard a sympathetic voice ask, and turning around, saw Miss Aimee standing beside him.

"Good gracious, Miss Aimee!" This was the first time he had so addressed her. "Why didn't you go back to the carriage?"

"Did my captain imagine," she said with sweet playfulness, "that I would break ranks and flee in the face of the enemy's fire? Suppose he had fallen in battle, I could at least, woman though I am, have supported his head until help came!"

Her gracious words, spoken in play, and yet with a ring of earnestness, thrilled the young man's soul like a strain of music.

"Oh, Aimee, Aimee!" he said in a voice unsteady

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through emotion. "I shall never forget how brave you have been this night!"

"Well, you must remember, sir, that I was following a brave leader!"

The retreat of the four men having been observed by the terrified Mr. Baumgart, and his no less fearful companion, they were soon sufficiently revived in spirits to draw near the spot occupied by the editor and Miss Leonard. Together the four young persons made a detour of the vicinity, and in so doing they made a grewsome discovery. They found that a silent occupant of a newly made mound had been taken therefrom, and the mound rounded up as before. The body had been wrapped in a large tarpaulin, preparatory to being hauled away. The other grave had just been commenced on, when the timely arrival of the young folks put an end to the work of the ghouls.

"Let's run down and ring the chapel bell!" said Mr. Baumgart, whose wits had now returned, and whose tongue could work freely. This was no sooner said than acted upon, and the weird, unearthly sounds were soon pealing forth upon the air, like a midnight dirge, indeed. In fifteen minutes a crowd had assembled, one of whose members was the sexton. The body was given to his charge, and the young folks drove home shuddering over their adventure.

As Mr. Howe was returning to his sleeping quarters that same night some one called and said:

"Hello! Misther Editor, kin yees tell me the manin' of all the noise and hubbub out be the graveyard tonight? Domned if Oi didn't belave it was the judgment day come at lasht!"

"Were you prepared?" jokingly inquired Mr. Howe.

"W-aal, Oi reckon about as well as Oi'll iver be,"

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he returned. Mr. Howe quickly informed Mr. O'Leary for he it was, of what had happened.

"Wa-al, did yees iver!" he exclaimed in deep astonishment. "And phat ar-re the domned craytures comin' to annyway, that they'll dig even the pore dead pable out av their gr-raves to make a dollar?"

As Mr. Howe ran up the steps of the hallway, the query suddenly came to him: "Where have I heard that voice before tonight?" But there were so many other things to think about, that he quickly dismissed the question from his mind unsolved.

CHAPTER XI.

IT IS precisely midnight. The two hands of the clock in the cupola of the town hall at Quarrytown both point solemnly and sacredly upward.

The iron tongue behind the dial has just begun to sound out in stentorian tones the number of the hour.

If one had cared to watch the movements of Patrick O'Leary an hour ago, he would have observed that when the last stroke of eleven had sounded, a mob of no less than forty perturbed and maudlin citizens had been ejected from his front door, the door promptly closed, the lights in his saloon room immediately extinguished, and, "to make assurance doubly sure," the blinds of both door and window carefully pulled down. Now that was an hour ago, and just at the hour, too, when the law provides that all licensed saloons must close. Since which time everything about Mr. O'Leary's premises has been as quiet as a country graveyard in a snow storm.

But look! Do you not see those closely-wrapped figures stealing up the alley beside the building occupied by the saloon? Let us draw nigh and count them. There are seven (fateful number) stately, solemn and tall. And they have come to a standstill hard by the door that opens into Mr. O'Leary's back room. And such is their stealth that not even the echo of a footfall or the faintest whisper is heard from them.

Again, let us suggest, that no sounds whatever can be heard in or around Pat's Place, and any reasonable man would go about his business, believing in good faith that the liquor dealer had prompt-

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ly closed up and vacated when the law says for him to do so. But the prying busybodies slipping along the alley are not to be taken in by mere surface indication. And, indeed, they do see a faint illuminated seam around the closed door, and a bundle of rays bound in the middle by the keyhole, through which they stream, and that to them, base prowlers, is satisfactory evidence that something of importance is going on.

See what, if anything may be observed within? Oh, to be sure! Quite a comfortable group are assembled on the inside of this rear room. Mr. O'Leary himself is present. Also Uncle Joseph Lipscombe, whom we have had occasion to meet more than once. Then there sits Perry Balk, brother of James H. Balk, the only manufacturer whom the village may enumerate, and one of the most ardent opponents the saloon possesses. Not so, this same Perry; for he loves to slip into O'Leary's and pass a bibulous evening beside his cozy fire. Of course, the elder brother knows nothing of his wayward tendency. If he did, more than likely, Perry would have no further employment in his brother's well-regulated and prosperous furniture factory.

O'Leary is in his jolliest mood, and as his guests are seated around the card table, he is ensconced in his easy chair by the fire telling his raciest jokes and singing in a subdued tone his funniest songs. The boys on the inside are more or less mellow, but nothing beyond so mild a term. It is only a select number of Patrick's especial friends who are permitted to enjoy the jollity of this occasion. Those of his customers who are inclined to overload and become drunken, while not to be lost sight of, being necessary adjuncts to a whisky seller's success, have been dismissed

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some time before this, for the reason that not even a saloonkeeper can trust important matters or supreme advantages to a drunkard. The poor drunkard, the very cornerstone upon which the liquor business must rest, is as heartily detested by the dealer as he is by anybody else. Nothing so runs down a "respectable" saloon as to have a maudlin, staggering drunken man—one of its finished products—effusively addressing himself to the sober people who may come in, and no one, indeed, is so heartily ashamed of him as the "respectable" saloonkeeper himself.

The saloonist is, perhaps, the only manufacturer who is always ashamed of his own product.

On this same night, as has been suggested, O'Leary's trusted friends only were permitted to remain. It is true that the friendship between Uncle Joe Lipscombe and the saloon man was almost on the breaking strain. But then O'Leary had been twice tried for misdemeanors, and Uncle Joe was familiar with all the facts and circumstances of each case, yet did not appear as a witness in either when he might have done so to Pat's great disadvantage. These things gave Patrick great confidence in the old man, though personally he had reason to dislike him because of his caustic criticisms.

A game of cards was in progress, and the gamblers were evidently playing for money. The proprietor was not engaged in the game. He was usually as hard a gambler as anybody. But tonight he preferred to sit beside the fire and sing and tell his coarse jokes. Two or three times he tried to force Mr. Lipscombe into the arena of yarn spinning with him, but the old man was apparently interested in the poker game, and was playing with all the zest of the younger men around him.

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By and by Mr. O'Leary glanced over and saw a goodly pile of small silver pieces lying in the center of the table.

"Hello! byes," he exclaimed, suddenly becoming interested, and edging his chair nearer the game, "yees moost be gittin' outside av yees twinty-five cint limit. Begorra! yees auld Jack Pot looks like the collition of a camp matin,' only Oi don't say any buttons!"

"Can't get into this game with buttons, Pat," said Perry Balk, "the master we are serving so faithfully day and night must have the cash!"

"An' phat masther d'yees mane, Perry?" inquired the proprietor with a puzzled look, raising his eyes from the table to fix them upon Mr. Balk.

"Why the Devil, of course!" was Perry's quick response: "The people of this community consider Pat the very high priest to his Satanic Majesty, and the saloon's his shrine, and we are all his worshipers!"

"Haw-aw! the domned fanatics!" retorted Mr. O'Leary throwing down his chin upon his breast, and speaking in his most guttural, most contemptuous tones. But he soon raised his head and began watching the game again. "Yis, yis," he said musingly, "yees a got a game tonight sure. But what would yees be afther doin' if thim domned fanatics would find it out? Yees know they'd fine me, an' maybe all yees like h—l if they'd only git the ividence to stick us!"

"Oh, what's the difference, Pat?" said Perry once more. "How are they ever going to find it out? There isn't a man here who'd ever 'cheep.' Is there, boys?"

A hearty "No, you bet!" came from the circle seated around the table.

"Oh, wa-al, Oi've tr-rusted yees, annyhow, an'

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Oi don't belave anny av yees would be domned mane enough to betr-ray me. So go ahead an' play out yees game. But the man who takes the auld Jack Pot must pay f'r the dr-rinks, or bedad Oi can't say how the house is goin' to raylize annything out av it at all, at all."

"You ought to sell 'chips,' Pat," suggested one of the players. "I wouldn't object to buying them of you and playing with them."

"Wa-al maybe Oi will by and by," answered the proprietor.

"I bet a 'daddy'," said one player, putting a silver dollar upon the pile.

"A 'daddy' don't tell me nothin'," said another player. "I think I'm onto your hand. I'll go you two better if I lose!" and he laid two silver dollars upon the table.

Uncle Joe Lipscombe evidently had a poor hand, and he didn't "stay in." Without attracting any attention he found an opportunity to lay down his cards, and slip outside. His absence was hardly noticed, as all were intent on watching the game. He was not gone to exceed a minute or two. When he returned he took his place at the table in the most unconcerned way. As he had hobbled back through the door, however, a careful observer might have noticed, that while he fumbled at the lock, he did not slip the bolt back into its place again, but deliberately left the door unfastened. The game was still in progress when he returned, the money being fully displayed.

"Are ye all 'up'?" inquired Perry, putting down a five-dollar bill. "I bet five dollars."

"Can't raise that," each player in turn admitted;

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whether it was because of lack of funds or poor cards did not appear.

"All right, then, I'm goin' to 'call' ye. What have ye all got?"

"Just as I expected," said one poor wretch; "d—n my luck, I've been sittin' here the whole time 'monkeyin' with a 'bob-tailed flush'!"

"I'm 'full'—threes and sevens," remarked another.

"Nit, that won't cut the 'mustard,'" exclaimed a third player, surveying the hands previously displayed with the eye of a connoisseur. "I'm away off better than that. I've got four queens an' a lovely jack! I'd a stayed with old Perry if I'd a had the 'dough'!"

"Yes you'd a played the Devil," shouted Perry, "You'd a lost all the money your wife's got. D'ye think you can 'buck' up against this 'ere sort of a hand? See? Ain't it a 'peach'?" Mr. Balk spread his cards out upon the table in the shape of a fan. "Look a here, will ye?. Four aces and a king!"

The players as well as Mr. O'Leary all bent forward with the most profound interest to gaze at Perry's wonderful hand. Just then the door flew wide open as if by magic, and in rushed seven members of the temperance committee pell-mell, helter-skelter. These were James H. Balk, Merchant Meek, Postmaster Anderson, Calvin Arson, the village butcher, Uncle Tommy McIntosh, Jimmy Hieronymous, the mail carrier, and the Rev. Avery Dorchester, pastor of one of the churches of Quarrytown. The gamblers, in the wildest confusion, leaped from their seats, knocking the chairs over behind them. One of them attempted to seize the money that was piled upon the table; for it was the strongest evidence of their guilt. He was too late, however. It was already in the firm grasp of Henry Anderson, while the cards

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had been taken in hand by Mr. Meek. Uncle Tommy McIntosh, not to be outdone by the bravest and best of them, had caught up a bit of chalk that the players, in other games, had used to keep their scores.

The surprises were not all on one side. Mr. Balk stared at Perry, and Perry stared at Mr. Balk. The silence was becoming oppressive.

"Hello, Brother Jim!" Perry managed at last to say.

"Perry," said Mr. Balk, sternly, "I surely did not expect to find you in such a place as this!"

"And, Brother Jim, by George," grinned back the younger brother, "I'll swear I never would have believed it of ye! To think **you'd** come to such a place as this, after night, and by the back door, too!"

This ill-timed pleasantry was entirely wasted on the dignified elder brother.

"You may call at the office in the morning and get your time!" was the reply, while the manufacturer's face assumed an expression that boded no good to Perry's soft and lucrative position in his brother's well-regulated and prosperous furniture factory.

"All right, Brother Jim; I'll have to take my medicine, I reckon," returned the newly discovered prodigal, somewhat abashed by his sudden and peremptory dismissal.

O'Leary had sprung to his feet at the very first rush. He was completely taken off his guard, having supposed that the door was securely fastened. He stared first at one committee man then at another in speechless disgust and dismay. He saw that he had been taken in the very act, not only of keeping his saloon open beyond the legal hour for closing, but of keeping a gambling house as well, the latter being a much more serious and unpopular offense.

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At first he was bored and bluffed, and could only make a sickly grin, but the reaction quickly set in, and he was soon facing the temperance committee with a red spot on each cheek and a dangerous glitter in his eyes.

"Begorra!" he said, making a ridiculous attempt to appear facetious and unconcerned, "Oi didn't know that Oi was to have the plea-asure av yees foine co-omp'ny this avenin gintlemin, or bedad Oi'd made bether prepara-ations f'r rayceivin such fine an' ille-gant pable!"

His voice sounded odd and absurd in his own ears, and it made him so much madder that he laid aside his attempt to be satirical forthwith.

"Say her-re, now," he continued in a louder and angrier tone, for he was feeling more and more the seriousness of the fact that he had been completely and successfully trapped. "D'yees hear-r phat Oi say? Yees say that dhure?" pointing with excited finger to the still open portal. "Yees be gettin' out t-rough that domned quick. It's undacent an' mane f'r the likes av yees to trate a gintlemin in anny such manner, whin he's tr-ryin' to make an hones' livin' in yees domned little town, yees ornary divils, git out wid yees!"

Here he seized a large iron poker and advanced upon the committee in the most threatening manner. The anti-saloon citizens were now passing out, accompanied by Uncle Joseph Lipscombe, who probably felt that his sphere of usefulness was no longer with the saloon and its partisans, Mr. Balk bringing up the rear. O'Leary now stood, weapon in hand, gazing at the retreating figures. Suddenly he raised the iron poker high above his head and leaped like a tiger upon the manufacturer. Before the bludgeon could descend upon

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the latter's devoted head, however, there was another to interfere who was quicker by far than O'Leary and as strong as a lion. He tore the weapon from the saloonkeeper's grasp and sent him sprawling back over chairs and table. It was Perry Balk.

"Pat O'Leary," he hissed between his set teeth, "by G— if you had struck my brother with that, I should have stamped you into the very earth! I am bad enough, gracious knows, or I should not be where I am tonight, but my brother is a good, true, Christian man, and such off-scourings of h—l as you are shall never harm one hair of his head!"

O'Leary recovered his balance, discomfited and considerably cowed.

"Oi beg yees par-rdon, Perry," he said humbly, "Oi beg yees par-rdon. Oi f'rgot the gintlemin was yees own brother, indade, Oi did!"

Whatever Perry might have been from a moral point of view, he was hardly subject to detraction, physically speaking, and Mr. O'Leary, though large and strong himself, well knew that fact.

This interesting tableau being ended, again the committee turned to go.

"Perry," said Mr. Balk, the sternness having departed from his face, and his tones softened and slightly trembling, "I told you to stop in the office in the morning and get your time. You needn't do that, my boy. As long as I have a roof in this world, you shall find shelter under it!"

"No, no; Brother Jim, you did right, you did right! I have disgraced you and myself tonight. I am going away in the morning!"

He did so, and was never seen in Quarrytown from that day. Years after, he was heard from in the west where he made a great success, but it was said

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that he was never known to visit a drinking place again.

Once more the Quarrytown anti-saloon forces invoked the aid of the law. The grand jury of Blackwood county returned a bill against Mr. O'Leary, charging him with keeping a gambling house. Again the latter secured the services of the crafty ex-judge, and gave battle, and an exciting trial took place.

The seven committeemen came upon the witness stand on behalf of the commonwealth, and, with becoming dignity, stated the facts as they saw them and as they have been given in the previous pages. They told how they had rushed in and seized the money and described the position of each player at the table. What had happened before their advent, or what game the players had been playing, these seven good citizens could not tell, and they were far too honest and conscientious even to make an attempt to do so. That part of the state's case had to be supplied by the evidence of Mr. Joseph B. Lipscombe, and the latter being placed upon the witness stand, stuck to the truth with an accuracy that must have surprised even himself. Judge Slawson never interrupted a witness nor asked a question on cross-examination. At last, the state rested.

"Mr. Balk, will you please take the witness chair once more?" was the first thing the ex-judge said when he began upon the defense.

Somewhat surprised, the manufacturer took the witness' position facing the jury once more.

"Mr. Balk," began the old lawyer, blandly, "I will ask you if you are acquainted with the reputation of Joseph B. Lipscombe in the community in which he resides for truth and veracity?"

Mr. Balk was in trouble in an instant. He was acquainted with the reputation of Uncle Joe as, in-

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deed, who was not? He hummed and hawed and hesitated.

"Answer the question 'yes' or 'no' Mr. Witness," sternly commanded the judge from the bench.

"We-ll, yes; I-I believe I am," said Mr. Balk.

"Is that reputation good or bad?" continued the ex-judge with grim pleasure.

Mr. Balk's troubles increased fourfold. He desired to protect the old man. In fact, he was willing to do anything in his power to save from disgrace their star witness, but the truth had to come. So he held down his head and said simply:

"I'm afraid it isn't very good!"

Judge Slawson was radiant with delight. He immediately produced each one of the seven committeemen, and forced him in turn to swear to the same thing. Poor old Uncle Joe! his oath was impeached and his testimony was thrown out of court.

The old lawyer then placed upon the witness stand the entire coterie of persons who were with his client in the rear room, enjoying his hospitality and good cheer, save Perry Balk, and they all swore to practically the same story. They told how Perry Balk had just treated the crowd to beer, and had given O'Leary a twenty dollar bill out of which to take the pay therefor. They said the latter had brought the change that was coming to him (Perry), and had laid it down on the table beside him, and that Perry, being interested in the game, which was just for amusement, had not as yet put it into his pocket when the temperance people rushed in. Strange as it may seem, the money which the committee had produced in court corresponded to the exact sum that Perry ought to have received after the pay for the beers had been taken out. Again,

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a jury of Mr. Patrick O'Leary's peers returned a verdict of acquittal, and that much persecuted gentleman walked out of the court once more a free man!

CHAPTER XII.

INVOLVED in the previous accounts of the editor and the charming Miss Leonard there was the suggestion—possibly from the mere circumstances alone—that the former might be in love with the latter. And the glad inference followed very quickly upon the heels of this suggestion, that in all human probability, that interesting young lady was about to return to Mr. Howe the same gentle emotion. At any rate, the situation so impressed Dr. Leonard, and he had the best means in the world of obtaining such information, having kept his eye fixed on the young couple all the while.

He had a more ambitious allotment in life for his fair daughter, than that she should be the wife of the young newspaper man, and he resolved to checkmate any such play, at least before the move above foreshadowed should be consummated.

For some time, Mr. Howe had felt a cold breeze blowing upon him from this paternal iceberg, but it had not been frigid enough to chill the warmth of his affection. The doctor was beginning to come to the conclusion that a more heroic treatment must be adopted, or the case was in danger of reaching a malignant and hopeless stage, such, indeed, as would not only include the young man but his daughter also in a condition in which cure would be impossible. He saw that it was necessary for him to become busy at once, and he began by treating the editor with studied discourtesy whenever an opportunity presented itself. In fact, he made a veritable bear of himself whenever the young man chanced to come within range.

But what really well-balanced gallant ever stayed

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away from the maiden of his choice because some old ogre of a father did not like him? We all admire the courage and spirit of Young Lochinvar. And while in these piping times of peace--these days of higher civilization--it is hardly in good form to drive one's warhorse (so few of us have any warhorses any-more!) prone against a sweetheart's door, snatch her from a craven-hearted, would-be bridegroom, and bear her away *vi et armis*, yet there are still serious obstacles to overcome. Mr. Howe, were he a true knight, should have appreciated the quest all the more because of these elements of doubt and uncertainty.

But the young man was beginning to experience some of the results of the old doctor's determined opposition. His keen sensibility soon detected that he was no longer a welcome visitor at the Leonard home. Twice in the last few weeks, Miss Aimee had declined to accept his polite offer to become her escort at two functions, and the last time she refused his proffered company, and he had stayed away through disappointment and chagrin, he had learned afterwards that she had been present accompanied by a young man from the city. Could it be possible that such a change as this had come over the winsome young lady? She who had been so engaging; who had been his friend and companion already in more than one exciting adventure? Love is so jealous that a young man cannot look calmly on both sides of such incidents, but is prone to think that it is all over with him, when he sees his adored one in the company of an engaging stranger. And so, to an extent, circumstances were beginning to jar the editor, and his appetite was beginning to be involved, and his capacity to sleep somewhat lessened.

Being headed off from the functions, and frowned

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away from her home, the saddened young man was forced to fall back once more upon the church services and the choir meeting. He knew, of course, that Aimee was such a sturdy little Presbyterian that she would not neglect her duties to the church and choir, even had she been required to forego some of the demands of society, and he congratulated himself with the thought that he should be able frequently to meet and converse with her.

One Thursday evening somewhat later in the season Mr. Howe arrived at the church for choir practice nearly an hour before the usual time. He sat down in the cozy little church parlors, "dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before," perhaps, when in came the very subject of his dreams unaccompanied. Something about the young lady's demeanor might have given some folks the impression that she had slipped away from her home and had purposely avoided being accompanied.

They had a most delightful *tete a tete* before the other singers arrived. Ezra had never seen Aimee when she was more kind and gracious. It was almost a tender interest she manifested when she referred laughingly to the plunge off the ridge. Then she spoke of his bravery at the cemetery, as if hers was not even more to be admired. Mr. Howe felt like shaking hands with himself because he was ever called upon to pass through such thrilling adventures.

Miss Aimee's home was no less than six squares away. Sometimes she came with another lady member. Most often, however, her brother, a lad of fifteen, came with her, but that night he was not in evidence. It was, indeed, a most urgent situation. Surely, doctor or no doctor, it was Howe's duty as a gentleman to see her safely home. At any rate, he

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did so, and when they reached the front gate of the stately Leonard mansion, what should the young lady do, but graciously invite him in. And he? Declined the same with thanks. It was, of course, merely a perfunctory invitation. As if the winsome Miss Aimee could do anything perfunctory. But she came back coaxingly, her sweet face upturned to his, her eyes mirroring the stars, and said:

"Please do Mr. Howe, and let us sing together that beautiful song you sent me. Mamma doesn't know you wrote the music, and I want to surprise her. The tenor is so pretty!"

There was nothing perfunctory about that invitation. It was genuine and earnest.

"I fear my presence would not be satisfactory to some members of your family," he faltered.

"Why should Mr. Howe fear so long as his presence is agreeable to me?" she asked.

Why should he, to be sure? At any rate he went in. Once inside the handsome parlors, the first thing the dutiful and obedient girl did was to present the young man to her mother, a pleasant and matronly lady, whom Aimee greatly resembled. Mrs. Leonard acknowledged the introduction graciously, and paid the editor so rare a compliment as to say that Aimee had spoken of him frequently, and the young lady's cheeks took on another shade of beautiful red when she listened to her mother's words.

By and by, Miss Leonard was at the piano, and he was standing by her side. They sang together several songs, and Mr. Howe was certain that his tenor was the best it ever had been. Why, the proper notes just came spontaneously under the inspiration of Aimee's presence and her delightful singing. One

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selection they sang together was a poem by an obscure author set to music. The words were these:

MY PRAYER.

When setting sun smiles back on summer's golden sky,
And the evening primrose droops its gentle head,
As one who is in Thee full well prepared to die,
Let me mine end approach, serene and comforted!

*

And Father, oh, my Father! closely let me cling
Unto Thy mighty side when break life's fast'nings frail;
And grant me safe the shelter of Thine awless wing
When I but face the darkness of the untrod trail!

*

And give me such a faith and such a hope and trust,
That I may lay firm hold thy promises upon
When spurns my rising soul its lowly comrade dust,
Nor doubt Thee in that change mysterious and wan!

The last note of this song had no sooner ceased to resound than the silken curtains of the doorway between the front and rear parlors parted and Mrs. Leonard again came into the room where the two young folks were.

"My dear children," she said, "sing that beautiful, beautiful song once more. The scene those words depict in their delicate imagery comes clearly and distinctly to my mind. I can see that peaceful and glorious sunset. And then I can imagine my own little barque adrift on the waves passing from earth toward the shores of eternity! And then the music is so sweet and appropriate!"

"Mamma, your eloquence is especially gratifying," said Aimee, with a face radiant with suppressed merriment.

"Who is the composer?" asked Mrs. Leonard. "I see it does not appear on the music."

"Why, mamma, you'll turn Mr. Howe's head!" laughed the amused daughter.

"What do you mean, Aimee?" inquired the mother,

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glancing at the editor, who was blushing like a school girl.

"Mr. Howe is the composer, and you have surely paid him a high compliment!" was the answer.

"Indeed, and he deserves it, too!" Mrs. Leonard extended her hand to the young man, saying: "Mr. Howe, I did not know that you had such ability in musical composition. Permit me to congratulate you. And now I must insist with greater earnestness than ever that you sing it once more."

This request was granted and Mrs. Leonard passed from the room. By and by, there came a lull in the music, and Mr. Howe heard a horse and buggy coming up the graveled way beside the mansion. The proud and haughty old doctor had come. The editor was in for it. It was too late to beat a retreat now. Ezra heard the side door open, and he imagined the temperature within the house lowered rapidly. He judged from that that the doctor had come in. He heard footsteps in the rear parlor. The temperature was now low enough for a frost! He could easily distinguish the old physician's voice, asking his wife who it was in the front parlor with Aimee. He could not catch her answer, but knew in reason that it must be his name.

"What, that mast-fed fellow? What's he doing here?"

CHAPTER XIII.

THESE words in the old doctor's unmistakable voice and exquisite emphasis he heard as plainly as if they had been said to himself at a distance of five feet. "Mast-fed fellow! Mast-fed fellow!" What in the world did he mean by that? It took the editor two weeks to arrive at anything like a fair conception of the meaning of that cruel expression, and trace out all the hidden insult and contempt there was in it.

From the sounds and maneuvers in the other room, it was evident that the old doctor was about to invade the front parlor. Poor Aimee! she had, also, heard the keen taunt her angry parent had uttered, and was, perhaps, better able to understand his hidden meaning than the editor himself. She held down her head and bit her lip with deep mortification. Once she glanced up at Mr. Howe, and then he noticed that her cheeks were scarlet, and her eyes were full of tears. Just then the stern old man stalked coolly into the room. Such conduct on the part of an average citizen would have been denounced as ill-bred and ill-mannered. But Dr. Leonard was a "privileged character" and the people had long indulged him in his boorishness.

"Good evening, doctor!" the editor said in his blandest, most apologetic tones. Somehow or other, the young man felt sort of guilty, but of just what offense he was not able to figure out. He was disposed to smooth over the affair as best he could, and by so doing he might be able to disarm the old daw-plucker's fierce dislike and censure.

Without returning the young man's salutation,

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or even so much as noticing his presence, Dr. Leonard advanced to the center of the room. He turned to his daughter, and in the overbearing tones of a true domestic tyrant he said:

"Aimee, have the kindness to retire; I desire to speak to this young man by himself!"

The young lady slowly arose to her feet, and passed to the arched door. When she reached it, she stopped, turned around, and took a step into the room again. Her cheeks were still flushed, and her eyes burned with a look of deep indignation, if not of downright rebellion. A moment she stood thus gazing at her father, whose back was turned toward her as he faced young Howe, then she turned around hesitatingly again, and was gone. It was evident that this high-spirited young miss was about to take some position adverse to parental authority. But her excellent common sense and her native appreciation of true courtesy kept her from so doing. For the present, at least, she was compelled to leave her friend to the tender mercies of her father. Possibly she felt her ability to bind up any wound the old man might inflict.

Dr. Leonard twirled his cane around a time or two like a boy might twirl a sling before hurling a pebble, as if debating whether to use it on the intruder, then he dropped it in the hollow of his arm and sat down.

"Be seated, sir," he said coldly. "I desire to converse with you to your very great advantage a few minutes!"

Mr. Howe complied. The doctor took a pinch of snuff, looking steadily at the young man all the while.

"I suppose it may be admitted," he continued, "that you are here tonight as the guest of my daughter.

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And on that account it may be true that it is my duty to treat you with more or less courtesy. On the other hand, I am constrained to speak plainly and pointedly to you in order to save you from future pain and humiliation."

His victim appearing innocuous, Dr. Leonard placed his cane across his knees and continued:

"Sir you are doubtless, in your own respective sphere, a very proper young fellow, and I have no particular quarrel to pick with you. I might observe, however, that I have lived a great many years without so much as knowing you, and you have put in your entire life without the advantage of my acquaintance. And so far as I know or can determine, neither of us has suffered so very greatly by being deprived of the other's society!"

It is very difficult to give an adequate impression of the perfect emphasis the doctor put on these words. A master elocutionist could not have done better. They were going straight home to the place intended, too! Mr. Howe's erstwhile flushed face was growing pale, and he seemed to be in distress.

"I am going to be consistently frank with you, young sir," he continued. "I never liked you from the first day I ever saw you. Further, I have a hearty contempt for any man who would settle down in a town of this size and be content with publishing the little thumb paper that you send forth!"

This savored a little of the old adage of the kettle calling the pot black. What had he been doing in a town of that size all of those years? The physician paused and took another pinch of snuff. Then he sniffed a time or two apparently with contempt, but possibly, only with snuff, and resumed his task of flaying the editor.

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"To make a long story short, you are not a welcome guest at my home; you are not an acceptable associate of my daughter!"

The young newspaper man arose quietly and was preparing to take his departure from a home wherein he was *persona non grata*.

"Am I to understand, doctor," he asked calmly, "that I am not acceptable to **you** as your daughter's associate or to **her**?"

"I, being her father, shall for the present, at least, assume the prerogative of speaking for both," was the cold-blooded answer. "I say that you are neither acceptable to me nor to her! Have you not learned that she is the betrothed wife of another? For that reason—can't you see? if for no other, she ought not to be entertaining comparative strangers in her parlors at this late hour!"

"The old wretch," thought Ezra, "he is willing to cast a smirch upon the fair integrity of his daughter in order to carry his point." But this last intelligence was a staggering blow and hurt the young man a thousand times more than any taunt or sneer he could have uttered. Was Aimee engaged? Could she have shown him the kindness and attention that he had received from her, knowing at the same time that she was the affianced wife of another? Such a positive statement from the father ought to be pretty authoritative. And yet, the delightful frankness and candor that were distinguishing traits of the young lady made him seriously doubt it. There surely could be no double dealing, no deceit in that fair one's make up. Still, he must remember that she had declined his invitation once—though she had done it tenderly and sweetly, he would admit—and had afterwards gone to the same gathering with Mr. Alison. When he came to think

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about it (and he came to think about it at once, and kept at it pretty persistently) he had to concede that beyond a kind and gracious friendliness, nothing had ever taken place between them. It might be true then what her father had stated. Then faith gave way all at once as it often does, and he said within his soul, "It is true! Oh, Aimee, Aimee!"

The old doctor was too good a physician not to see that there was an unusual mental disturbance—a "brain storm," perhaps, taking place inside the young man's cranium. An eternal indication thereof, among others, was a somewhat wretched, woe-begone look that overspread his face. After all, why should he be so severe on a man who loved his peerless daughter? Such a one was not deficient in good judgment; for the doctor was very proud of Aimee, and fully alive to the fact that she was an unusually beautiful and sweet-dispositioned young woman.

He went on in a softer, more conciliatory tone:

"Now, I shall ask you as a favor to me and to her as well, that you do not accompany her home any more even if she should so far forget her standing with another as to permit it. I allow, sir, that you are a gentleman and that you will act the part of a gentleman, now that you are made aware of her obligations. Therefore, I have made free to explain to you the fact of her plighted troth!"

"I thank you for the one good word in my favor you have so tardily expressed,"—Ezra was coming back at the old gentleman hammer and tongs now! "I am really glad you 'allow' that I am a gentleman! As for staying away from your house, that I shall do! As for staying from your daughter and cutting her acquaintance because of what you say, Dr. Leonard, I shall never do **that**! Those things only she may cause

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me to do, and the slightest whisper to that effect by her expressed would send me away from her side forever! But, my dear doctor, she has never shown me any such token of her disfavor as yet, and as I love her and trust her as the very embodiment of all that is sweet and lovable in womankind, I don't believe she ever will!"

"Um-m-m!" The doctor cleared his throat and looked at the editor with eyes that shone like a cat's in a dark corner. "So you have been twinking and talking about **love** have you?" He was eager for an answer. "Has my daughter admitted any such tender passion for you, my dear young sir?"

The editor now saw that he was about to have an inning. So, taking his hat, he stepped toward the hallway door.

"Here!" said the doctor, following him up, anxious to allay in his mind the disquieting suspicion that the young man's rather boastful words had aroused in his mind. "Why don't you answer my question?"

"I bid you good evening, doctor!" and he was gone.

CHAPTER XIV.

SOME time had elapsed since Mr Howe's unpleasant interview with Dr. Leonard, and the young man was scarcely recovering from the dejection that had been produced. To add to his discomfort, he had seen Miss Aimee but a few times, and that was either at church or Sunday school. Even then she had scarcely noticed him. The last fact was the most unpleasant of all, for it appeared to confirm her father's statement that she was the promised wife of another. He did not seem to think that possibly she was deeply chagrined because of her parent's ungentlemanly conduct, and that this might have had more to do with her shyness than anything else.

He thought once or twice that he saw her cast furtive glances in his direction, but the moment she saw that he had caught her eye, she dropped her head demurely, and appeared anxious that Mr. Howe should think she had not been looking at him. The young man was becoming more and more fearful that the old doctor had told the truth about Aimee's engagement. He tried to steal an interview with her, but the old doctor was ever on the alert, and baffled every effort. Then he thought he would write her a little note, and ask her for an explanation of her present relations with young Alison. But the "little" note he commenced to write a time or two would string out to two or three pages before he had well-nigh begun. He remembered, too, that their acquaintance had been quite meager, and was he not presuming a great deal, in view of what her father had said, to write to her at all? So he halted between two opinions, worried until he was miserable—and did nothing.

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Miss Aimee had now ceased to sing in the choir regularly. She did not attend the choir meetings during the week. Poor Ezra! He haunted every place where he had ever seen her before in hope that he might see her again and if possible speak to her, but of no avail. Mr. Howe was sure that she was kept out of the choir by her domineering father, and, doubtless, on his own account. He was more than once on the verge of going to Dr. Leonard and begging him to let such a sweet singer come back into the choir, and promising the father that, if he would do so, he himself would stay out. But he wasn't overly fond of conversation with the old doctor, so he put off such a disagreeable job from day to day, and never did it at all.

Of course, he dreaded the influence of the father over the daughter, for he judged it must be very great and all against him. The more he meditated on his chances of winning the beautiful girl, the less sure he regarded his ultimate prospect of success. Whenever circumstances are so froward that youth and health and ardent love are ready to lie down in despair, no other combination of qualities possible to the human constitution need make any effort against them. The young man reasoned upon every phase of the situation, and in every direction the poor lack-faith reasoned himself "out of court," as the lawyers say. There was, indeed, a mere straw or two that pointed in his direction. For instance: If it were a foregone conclusion that she was going to be some other fellow's wife, why did Dr. Leonard watch her so closely? Why did he take her out of the choir?

Several times Mr. Howe had seen young Alison an honored guest at the Leonard home. Then he thought of the cruel treatment he himself had received while there, and it filled his soul with bitter-

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ness. He saw Miss Leonard and Mr. Alison out driving one afternoon, and the first sight of them upset him dreadfully. But a second view revealed the fact, that though the buggy seat whereon they sat was narrow, yet there was a comfortable space between them. On another occasion, a Sunday night, Aimee and young Allison had come to church together. And this time, in the pew they occupied, there was, also, a distinct space. Ezra placed great stress on that space. Nobody but a lover could have noticed such things.

One day about the middle of December Mr. Ezra H. Howe was sitting in his office indulging in conflicting meditations, when the door opened, and a bright little lady came in.

"I came to pay for my paper and to renew my subscription for another year." This she said, at the same time handing the young editor two dollars. The *Augur* was one dollar per annum; payable in theory, in advance, but in practice, whenever its proprietor could get the money.

"What is the name?" queried the newspaper man, preparing to write a receipt.

"My name is Katie Works, but I think the paper comes in my father's name, David Works."

"Oh, yes; here it is," the editor responded, having found the name in his subscription book.

"Probably you know where we live," Miss Works continued. "It is about two miles west of Quarrytown, the Oakdale farm." Ezra remembered that he had driven past the farm she named, and that it was a very beautiful and well-improved place. The house, a handsome two-story structure, painted white, with green blinds, stood some distance from the highway,

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in a fine blue-grass pasture, shaded by sugar maple trees. There was never an oak in sight!

"By the way, Mr. Howe, we are going to have a party at our house next Tuesday night," Miss Works went on to say, with the most pleasing of smiles, "and we should like to have the editor present to give us a nice little write up." She watched Mr. Howe intently, as if interested in noting the effect her words would produce, while there was a merry twinkle in her eyes, that was hardly in accord with the dignity one stranger ought to maintain in the presence of another. Ezra was nettled somehow or other by her manner.

"I am counting on having twelve couples there," she observed further, "and I counted on yourself and your lady company being among them."

The young editor thought it decidedly singular that an entire stranger should come in that manner, and invite him to her proposed party, so he "fished" around for some pretense to get out of going.

"You will please excuse me from attending," he said, "you will have ten or twelve couples out there anyway, and you won't need me. I should have to come by myself, and, of course, would be very much out of place."

"Oh, indeed, couldn't you get any lady to come with you?" asked the little woman naively.

"No; none with whom I should care to go!" Poor Ezra thought of his unfortunate situation with Miss Aimee, and sighed, as Riley would put it, "like a wet fore stick."

"Oh, well; we can manage that all right," said Miss Works in a most encouraging, not to say patronizing tone; "you come anyway. I have a cousin who will be there that night, and you can be her gentleman

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friend. She's a fine looking girl, and I just know you will enjoy her company!"

Whew! Mr. Howe had never heard of the like before. An entire stranger making terms and conditions like these to him. It was decidedly impudent. Why he should have respected her fully as much, had she proposed **herself** as his companion. And yet, this creature seemed to enjoy her suggestion hugely. In fact, he thought she was going to laugh in his very face. There was a twitching of her pretty red lips, and she had to bite one real hard to make it behave itself. Ezra stared at her in astonishment.

"I don't think I shall care to come," he said coldly. **Her** cousin, indeed! As if he would care to pass an evening as the gallant of any living girl save the sweet Aimee. The bare insinuation was sacrilege! He would not go at all now, just for that!

"You don't know my cousin?" inquired Miss Works, persistently.

"No, I don't," replied the young man with a degree of acrimony, and he was about to add, "And I don't want to, either!" But he has been glad a great many times since then that he did not give expression to those last words.

"She's a fine girl and as pretty as a picture! She knew she was going to be at our house that night, and she suggested that I should invite you. I think she knows you!"

Did anybody ever hear of such boldness? It was more than that; it was downright insolence; yes, that's the word, **insolence!** And there she stood actually enjoying the editor's badly concealed disgust.

"Did your cousin," (with withering emphasis on the words "your cousin") "suggest that I be invited that I might fill up the coterie of your guests and,

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also, be her associate as well on the occasion of your social gathering?" This Mr. Howe asked in irony, using all the big words he could readily command in order to render his dignity more impressive. He thought surely the young miss would flinch, or, at least, qualify the situation into which she had put herself. But no, she was actually making her language pointed and emphatic. She dropped her head, and looking up at the editor through her long, dark lashes, a faint gleam of humor in her pretty eyes, she answered:

"Really, Mr. Howe, she didn't word it just like you do, but I am sure that was her object in having me invite you. To tell you the whole truth,"—this with a sudden burst of confidence, that almost swept the young man off his feet, "she had me give the party for that purpose!"

"Ah-h-h-h!" he said coldly, "your cousin is kind, very kind!"

"Indeed she is, Mr. Editor; indeed she is, and you will say so when once you see her."

"By the way, Miss Works, who is your remarkable cousin?" He was tired of all this palaver and wanted to know the name of the impudent—yes, he thought **impudent**—young woman who had made herself so bold as to send such a message. And he frowned more heavily than any gentleman should do in the presence of a lady.

"My cousin, Mr. Howe, don't you know her?" and the interesting creature elevated her head with the greatest apparent nonchalance, and fixed her eyes on the right hand upper corner of the room. There may have been a figure in the wall paper she wanted to observe. "My cousin; I was of the impression that

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you knew her." She had now become too provokingly slow and deliberate.

"No, Miss Works, I have **not** that pleasure," hastily rejoined the editor, desirous of terminating the conversation at once.

"How strange," musingly, "I was almost sure you knew **her**. Her name is—Miss—Aimee—Leonard!"

The effect these last words produced upon the young man was electrical. Had he yielded to a sudden impulse, he would have jumped two feet high in surprise or ecstasy, possibly both.

"Is Aimee—I mean Miss Leonard—your cousin? And will she be at your party that night? And did she suggest that you invite me?" All of the questions were asked excitedly, and practically in the same breath.

The precious little lady—Aimee's cousin—was enjoying the present phase of things immensely.

"One question at a time, if you please, sir," she said with severe gravity, while in fact she could hardly refrain from laughing outright. "Yes; she is my cousin; her mother and mine are sisters. She will surely be at my party; for I am giving it at her instance. And she it was who caused me to invite you!"

"Oh, I am so delighted!" exclaimed the editor, who had suddenly been pulled out of the sea of despondency, and tumbled into the ocean of bliss. He was all smiles and sunshine now, and he was bowing with the most approved courtesy, a very Chesterfield. Miss Works evidently understood something of the situation existing between the twain, and of the unkind treatment that he had received from Dr. Leonard.

"I know how Uncle Dr. Leonard talked to you," she said. "And, further, I can tell you that neither Aimee nor her mother sees such evil traits in you as



"HOW STRANGE! I WAS ALMOST SURE YOU KNEW HER. HER NAME IS MISS AMELI LEONARD!" THE EFFECT ON THE YOUNG EDITOR WAS ELECTRICAL.

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to cause them not to treat you with courtesy. Uncle will make no objections if Aimee comes to our house. But he will hardly dream of you being there. I tell you, though, Dr. Leonard is a regular terror, not only in his home but everywhere else!"

"How can I ever thank you and her, Aimee—Miss Leonard—for your kindness?"

Would he be there? Why, of course, he would. Nothing should prevent him. He would overcome any resistance, baffle any obstacle, climb any height, rather than miss such an occasion. He was so profuse in his joyous expressions, and so agreeable and polite, that Miss Works could now say with perfect frankness, that it was a pleasure to meet so affable a gentleman. **Would he go? Wouldn't he go!**

CHAPTER XV.

THE Tuesday referred to in Miss Katie's delightful invitation had arrived and Mr. Ezra H. Howe was making elaborate preparations for going out to Oakdale. He had a perfect mania for details in this instance, and no wonder. When a man concentrates every faculty, mental as well as physical, on one lone object, he ought to become pretty accurate as to the *minutia*. Mr. Howe had polished his shoes at least three times, and they had attained such a degree of shine that he never believed possible before. He put on and took off at least four separate and distinct collars and then tackled the fifth. There must be neither spot nor finger print on his immaculate linen. He brushed his new suit of clothes up one side and down the other sundry and divers times. Two hours before a proper time for starting had arrived he was good and ready — and how the minutes dragged along!

At last he found that the time for starting had fully come. The best rig in Qarrytown, obtained from the most pretentious stables, was none too good for him. He was going at the invitation of the sweetest girl in Christendom, and no arrangement should be omitted that would show that he did not fully appreciate the sublime occasion.

He rang the door bell at the Works mansion, and was ushered into the parlors by Miss Kate herself. There were eight or ten young couples already there, and the house was resounding with their merry laughter and conversation. He glanced around to note familiar faces, and saw with pleasure his genial friend,

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Felix Baumgart, and the charming Miss Bertha Wood.

"Hello, Ezra!" shouted Felix, coming out of the corner where he had been sitting on a sofa beside his sweetheart; "you look lonesome tonight. Are you by yourself?"

Ezra reddened slightly and glanced around the room and then at Miss Katie, who was engaged in marshaling her young guests preparatory to presenting them to the editor. Felix shrewdly followed his gaze, and caught some impression of the situation of affairs.

"Told you you'd have trouble with old Doc yet, didn't I? He's a regular 'stem-winder' when he gets started!" and he drew closely to Mr. Howe's side.

"But," ventured Ezra, "you assured me at the same time—that Aimee was disposed to—to think kindly of me."

"Oh, of course she is!" continued the brusque Teuton; "she's a born lady. She'll treat anybody well! You didn't expect you'd ever get to marry her, did you, Ezra? If you did, I guess you're left. She'll marry some rich man. I understand she's engaged to a young gent in the city named Alison!"

Mr. Howe's head was swimming, and he couldn't see more than four feet away. Just then Miss Katie began introducing her guests one by one. Ezra often wondered how he got through the ordeal, but he did.

Miss Works had evidently heard the last remark made by Mr. Baumgart and she appeared to be annoyed thereby. But her attention being attracted elsewhere, she said nothing. The young man was never in his whole life so completely upset. He had builded his hopes mountain high, and now they had tumbled down like a toy blockhouse. He had expected to meet Miss Leonard at this party. Indeed,

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he had felt that all the barriers between himself and her had been removed. He had dwelt in delightful mental reverie upon the gallant and devoted things he would say to her, and had fondly imagined what her answers would be. And now, in the face of her own arrangement, she wasn't even present. And then, to have it thrown in his teeth that she was engaged to marry another man! He took the seat set for him by Miss Katie, and with his handkerchief wiped his perspiring face. After thinking the matter over to some extent, he discovered a pique against Miss Works herself for the invitation and the hope and promise it contained. Why did **she** conspire to build him up so highly, and then dash his hopes against a rock? He immediately resolved that he would seek her, demand an explanation, and then take himself away from her home forever! But just at this moment the young lady herself returned, and leaning over the back of his chair she said in a low tone:

"Mr. Howe, are you disappointed?"

He laid aside all reserve, his pique having been overcome by her kind tone and manner, and replied:

"Yes, indeed, Miss Works; I am **very much** disappointed!"

"I am, too, Mr. Howe," she admitted; "when I invited you to come to Oakdale, I did so at her instance. We had the understanding that she would come out here in the afternoon, and remain at our house over night. She hasn't come for some reason or other, and has sent no explanation. I hope you will forgive me; for I was perfectly innocent of any intention to disappoint you."

"You are very freely forgiven, Miss Works," said the editor gallantly. "I do not question your sincerity." Did he question **Miss Aimee's**? Then he

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continued after a moment's meditation: "But what do you say about your cousin's engagement to a young man named Al—Alison.

Katie raised her eyebrows and smiled amusedly. The young man's anxiety was more easily borne by her than him. It's singular how much better our friends can stand our troubles than we can!

"Oh, I don't know for sure about **that**, Mr Howe," was her quick response. "You'll have to find out for yourself about **that**! I will tell you this, however," she ventured after some hesitation, "that I've heard Uncle Dr. Leonard say repeatedly that Aimee and Elbert Alison have been betrothed from their cradles. Young Alison's father and Uncle Doctor are great friends. But I've never heard the young lady say aye or nay about it!"

"But do **you** suppose it possible that Miss Aimee considers herself engaged to that young man?"

Miss Katie had made up her mind that she would give the young editor no satisfaction. She knew, precious little schemer, just how the land lay! And he ought to have gumption enough to know, so she thought, and if he didn't, let him boil and stew awhile longer!

"Oh, it's possible that she does!" she said with provoking coolness. "You know he goes to see Aimee quite often, and her father is determined to make them marry, and he is a power!"

"How can you reconcile her kind invitation to me if she considers herself the promised wife of Elbert Alison?" asked Ezra.

"I don't try to reconcile it, Mr. Howe!" responded Katie with engaging candor. "And yet," she continued, "after Uncle Doc had insulted you I can understand how a sensitive girl might have desired

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to talk over the matter with you and apologize in detail. Really, if she had invited you to meet her here **alone**, there could have been **no** excuse for her conduct, or the theory of her being the promised wife of another, but the fact that the little party was arranged by her is some palliation!"

Just then a ring came to the front door, and Miss Katie ran quickly to the hallway entrance, and could be heard ushering in some new arrivals. Ezra thought he heard her say:

"Oh, Aimee! is this you? You don't know how disappointed I was. But you've come at last!" Mr. Howe's heart beat with great joy. Then he heard these words:

"And Mr. Alison, too!"

"I hope he is welcome, Katie!" That matchless voice, those exquisite tones! They were **hers**! "I took the liberty of inviting Mr. Alison myself, Katie!" **she** continued.

"He is perfectly welcome, to be sure!" replied the courteous Miss Works.

Mr. Howe's heart had almost ceased beating.

In a moment more, the new arrivals had come into the room and were being presented. Never had Miss Leonard appeared so beautiful as she was now standing beside his dreaded rival, and Mr. Howe was forced to admit that the latter was one of the handsomest young men he had ever seen.

Ezra and Felix had retired to the remote corner of the room. The ingenious young German had begun to "catch on" to the treatment his friend was receiving, being "cut out" by his rival, as he supposed, and had instantly become a strong partisan of his.

"I wouldn't speak to him, Ezra, if I were you!" he declared.

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But now Aimee, in good faith apparently, had brought him across the room and was presenting him to Mr. Baumgart, who acknowledged the introduction with a meager handshake, and a curt "Howdy!" It was Mr. Howe's turn next.

"Mr. Howe," Aimee said, and their eyes met. The young lady's cheeks were somewhat flushed, but her look was serious. Certainly, there was nothing of the coquette in her bearing. "Permit me to introduce to you my friend, Mr. Alison!" Both gentlemen bowed, both shook hands cordially.

Miss Leonard was standing beside the heretofore discomfited editor, and Katie, with the inspiration of genius, had speedily carried Mr. Alison into another room to present him to her father and mother.

"I had desired so much to speak to you, Mr. Howe," she began in gentle, serious tones. The young man looked into the beautiful eyes before him and loved her more than ever! "I never have been placed in such a delicate position in my life as I have been this afternoon," she continued. "I hope—"

Just then their conversation was suddenly interrupted by a vigorous calling on the part of the other young folks for Miss Leonard to take her place at the piano.

"Come on, Aimee, play us a waltz," they shouted in chorus. Three or four couples were standing ready to begin the graceful dance. Miss Leonard took her place at the instrument, and they were soon whirling away in unison of time and step to the pulsations of the music. Felix, with true German appreciation, and Miss Wood were among the number. Likewise, Katie and Mr. Alison.

Mr. Howe was standing where Miss Leonard had left him.

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"Don't be a 'wall-flower,' Ezra," whispered Felix, as he glided by, "get a 'wiggle' on yourself!"

Just then he saw Aimee glance over her shoulder from her music full at him. He imagined he saw encouragement and sympathy in that look, and he was emboldened to slip around the room and take his place at her side.

"Do you waltz, Mr. Howe?" she asked, at the same time keeping her fingers moving over the keys; "or are you too much of a Puritan?"

Mr. Howe admitted that he could waltz a little.

"Then, young man, behold your opportunity! There are several pretty girls,—good dancers, too,—unengaged!"

He assured her in somewhat tragic tones that he very much doubted if he could ever dance again.

"Will you dance with me?" she suddenly asked. At the same moment she reached the end of the music she was playing, turned around on the stool, and looked up at him with a sweet coaxing smile upon her features. His tragic resolution was gone in an instant, and he admitted without the least hesitation that he should be glad to do so.

"Here, Katie, you have just had a nice waltz with Mr. Alison, now play us **Sabra Las Olas**. Mr. Howe and I are going to dance, too!"

Katie came quickly and took her station at the piano while the editor and Miss Aimee took their places as dancers. While some may have admired the couple composed of Mr. Alison and Miss Aimee more than the one composed of Mr. Howe and the same young lady, the weight of authority would have been in favor of the latter couple. For this reason, perhaps, if for none other: Mr. Howe was larger, stronger and more masculine-looking. The graceful, delicate

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beauty of the woman made such a proper contrast to the heroic strength and manliness of the man, that the picture of the two, as they were standing there, was very fair to look upon!

Just then there came another ring on that miserable door bell and Katie had run to meet whoever came. As she opened the door in stalked Dr. Leonard himself, closely followed by his wife. He caught a glimpse at once of Ezra standing there very contentedly with one arm around his fair daughter, and the other hand clasping hers, and the old craft bore down upon the twain with an expression upon his features that was far from saintly.

Felix, in a pretense of awkwardness, stumbled against the old pill bags, and knocked his cane out of his hands.

"Excuse me, doctor," he said with the most effusive politeness, at the same time picking up the cane and returning it to its owner.

"Um-m-m!" replied Dr. Leonard, whose temper was evidently ruffled to a last degree, while he glared at Mr. Baumgart with a fierceness that was appalling to everybody but that smiling gentleman. But the interruption served its useful purpose. It enabled Aimee to slip away from Mr. Howe's side, and then that young man stepped out of the limelight.

"Why, Uncle Doctor Leonard!" exclaimed the vivacious Katie, who began playing the hypocrite for this once if never before. "I'm so glad you and Aunt Mariah took it into your heads to become members of our little party! You are both welcome, thrice welcome! I never once thought of it or I should have issued both of you a **special** invitation!"

Mrs. Leonard appeared to be very much annoyed and hurt. She said in a low tone to Katie, "Where's

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Clara?" meaning her own sister, Katie's mother, and hastened away to join her, while Katie led the stern-looking old physician into an adjoining room to relieve him of his great coat and hat. And the doctor had returned ere a minute had elapsed. It seemed that a pall had fallen over the gayety of the occasion. The young folks could see that some sort of trouble was brewing. Felix stood guard over the person of his friend, and in fact was the only one in the room who was not more or less awed by the entrance of the dignified doctor.

"How's the public health, doctor?" he asked with a familiar air, which the other regarded as impertinent.

"U-m-m-m!" was the only answer, in a more rasping tone than ever, as he seated himself.

"I understand the Moore children have diphtheria?" the young Teuton continued, without noticing that his last question remained unanswered. "Are you waiting on them, doctor, or is it the young doctor, Dr. Beggs?"

The old physician twisted uneasily in his seat. A keen cutting retort was on his lips, but he thought that the young man was his niece's guest and, perhaps, it would be out of place to rebuke him too severely.

"Young man," he said with a grim smile upon his face, which was anything but encouraging, "I appreciate the motive behind your efforts, but if no one has asked you to entertain me here this evening—" here he glanced significantly toward Miss Katie—"I believe I can get along without any special attention!"

The young folks heard the doctor's answer, and a suppressed titter went round at the expense of Mr. Baumgart, and he subsided with a good-humored grin.

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But he was all the more determined to help Ezra to the last degree.

Even the embarrassing presence of the old physician could not long keep in inaction the irrepressible good spirits of youth. There were games and singing, and by and by more light dancing. Aimee and Mr. Alison waltzed together, likewise, Katie and Mr. Howe. And while they glided over the velvet carpet, Katie whispered:

"Aimee wants to talk to you a few minutes, and I've been debating ever so long how to manage it. You must be real patient and do whatever I command you to do, or old Uncle Doctor will smash our little plans beyond recognition!" Mr. Howe promised by all things sacred that he would do so.

"When I give you the signal," continued Katie, "you must watch your chance, and when Uncle Doctor isn't looking, slip through the dining room into the conservatory and await Aimee's coming."

A short time after, Mr. Howe, who had followed directions to the letter, found himself within Katie's diminutive conservatory surrounded by flower pots, lemon trees and ferns. There was no light in this room save the light of the moon which was shining gloriously through the glass roof over head. But that made no difference; for everybody knows there are two classes of people who prefer moonshine to any other kind of shine and they are lovers and—lunatics!

Before him there was a rustic seat which in summer did service on the veranda. He seated himself thereupon, and prepared to await the coming of the young lady who had been so gracious as to grant him even this stolen interview. It could not have been so very long, though it seemed so to him, ere the door

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quietly opened and the graceful figure of the doctor's daughter stood before him.

"Keep thy seat, young sir," she said in playfully serious tones, "I have somewhat to say to thee!" Then she sat down beside him.

"I am happy to occupy no higher place in this world," he said with gallant enthusiasm, "than to be simply your humble listener!"

She looked at him steadily and smiled amusedly.

"Indeed!" she ventured, "how long would you be contented to occupy such a humble place and not talk back to me?"

"Forever and a day!" he declared stoutly.

"If you had said 'a day' simply," she returned, "I might have appreciated the compliment. But 'forever' is so long, my imagination can't entirely take hold of it! Your faith in me wouldn't endure for that long!"

"My faith in you!" he exclaimed, "My faith in you would endure for ages!"

"Sounds nice, young man, but 'the record in this case' as my father would say, is against you! It hasn't been an hour since you said in the bitterness of your heart that I was a coquette. I'm a mind reader, you see!"

"But I heard awful intelligence concerning you!" he replied. "Faith cannot exist in the face of facts!"

"Yes; it can, it must!" she exclaimed; "it's the very essence of faith never to doubt in spite of seeming facts!"

"But—but I heard—heard that you were en—engaged!" he stammered, growing red-faced and embarrassed as she unfolded his own record to him.

"And you believed it, of course, now didn't you?"

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"Well—well, I didn't know what—what to believe!" It was your—your father who told me, and I—I couldn't help believing him, now could I?"

"Of course you couldn't; at least you didn't. But, sir, if I had a lover at all I should prefer one who would never doubt me!"

"Oh, Aimee, darling!" he said with unspeakable tenderness, "if I may be permitted to be your lover, I shall never doubt again! Tell me, sweetheart, give me the assurance just once, that you are not engaged to another and—and—"

"There you go again! Sir, your impudence is simply sublime! Praying to be my faithful lover, and then doubting me in the next breath!"

"But, darling, is it so—what your father said?" persisted the poor doubting Thomas.

"Oh, I suppose, from his standpoint that it is true!" and Miss Aimee folded her hands resignedly. Ezra was about to tumble off his pinnacle again.

"But, really, you aren't, are you?" asked the newspaper man with a gasp.

"What do **you** think?" she demanded, coming back at him abruptly. "You have doubtless observed me for some time. You remember all I have said to you. You recall the invitation I sent for you to meet me here. Now answer me, young sir, have I acted like a conscientious girl who was pledged to be the wife of another?"

The poor doubter, Peter, she wanted him to walk upon the waves of her affection, but he couldn't.

"I know," he admitted, "all that has taken place between us since we met, like pure sunshine, will forever rest upon the memory of the scenes through which we have passed! But then—but then—"

"But then?" she insisted.

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"He goes with you quite often, and you came out with him this evening!"

"Yes, kind sir, and in all human probability I shall return with him this very night! I have Mr. Hobson's choice in the matter!"

But Mr. Howe was dull in local proverb, and had never heard of the celebrated "Hobson" and his "choice." But he was beginning to grow, expand. His faith was becoming larger—even larger than a mustard seed! He looked down into those beautiful eyes and he thought he read therein truth and a woman's priceless integrity!

Just then Katie came running in, all excitement.

"You'll have to break up this *tete-a-tete* at once! Uncle Doc has discovered the absence of you two, and he'll raise the roof off the house in five minutes more!"

An hour or so later, all the young folks and Dr. Leonard and his wife went home. The two latter together, and Mr. Alison and Aimee—and lastly, all by himself, Ezra H. Howe. The full moon was sailing serenely toward the western horizon, plowing her way through the fleecy clouds, which, rippling across her pathway, broke into waves of light and glory! And he fondly thought that his life was just as bright and full of promise!

CHAPTER XVI.

EZRA H. HOWE was momentarily standing on the sidewalk near the hallway leading up to the Augur office. It was five o'clock in the afternoon, and the editor's day's work was done. The printers had gone home, and the newspaper man had just locked up his office and was starting around the corner for his evening meal.

While he was standing thus, up came Sam Wilkins, one of the young men of the town. Sam was a good fellow in the most acceptable sense, was always well-dressed, and was very popular with the young ladies. He was what might be called a society leader, if such a thing as "society" existed in the village of Quarrytown. Whenever there was anything worth while taking place on the so-called "upper crust," Sam always had an invitation for himself and plenary power to invite anyone else he might see fit so to honor.

"Come and go with me over to Striker's Hill to-night," said Sam to the editor.

"Why, what's going on over there?" the latter asked.

"Oh, there's going to be a 'blow-out' of proportions, I'll tell you. What does Belle call it? Let me see. Oh, yes; it's a masquerade-skating-social! All the *bon ton* of Quarrytown are invited."

The editor looked down at the ground. He hadn't been invited.

"Miss Belle Striker, who is giving the masquerade social, left your name out of the list of her invited guests—"

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"I am painfully aware of **that** fact," coolly observed Mr. Howe.

"Yes, she left your name off of her list at the request of a very prominent citizen of this town, who isn't as fond of you as he might be!"

"Indeed!" ejaculated Ezra, becoming more interested.

"I might as well tell you, I guess, and then you'll know it's no pipe dream of mine. The first letters of the gentleman's name are Dr. Leonard. Ever hear of him before? Well, he persuaded Miss Belle and her folks not to give you an 'invite' and further persuaded her to invite a young 'blood' from the city named Halison or Alison. I think that's what they call it. Doc and his wife and Aimee and this young fellow are all expected to be present, and, well, I reckon,—most everybody else."

Ezra began to want to go now—very much so. But, somehow or other, he couldn't make friends with his summary and informal invitation.

Sam, having begun his task of explaining, thought it best to continue to the end.

"Miss Belle, after having done it, was kind of sorry to think she'd left you off her slate, because you know they all like to have the editor present to give them a little write up, and so she, woman like, after having promised 'never to say a word about it to a living soul,' told me, and I have told you! So the very ears that old Doc never expected to be reached are now tingling with this rare intelligence!"

"Well, I am surprised!" ventured Mr. Howe.

"I told Belle it wouldn't do for a little bit not to have you present, and, like as not, get no fine write up for her big party, and she thinks so, too. And she has commanded me to bear her apologies to you

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on a silver platter as it were, and further to produce your body at the party on pain of her intense displeasure."

There were still "sour grapes" in the invitation that set the editor's teeth on edge.

"But," he replied, "I've had so little notice, that it is now too late to get ready. I have neither masque nor a befitting costume."

"Oh, that don't make any difference," returned Mr. Wilkins, "there will be lots of people there who will not be masqued. Get ready and I will drive around for you at seven o'clock."

Still the editor hesitated. But Sam knew well enough how to bring him around. He had received positive orders from Miss Belle to bring the editor at all hazards. She had reluctantly left his name off the list of her invited guests in the first place. Dr. Leonard had great influence with her and her parents, and she had had no personal acquaintance with young Howe. But when she came to think about it, the newspaper man was a most important personage to have present. She was giving a swell function at which all of the **elite** of Quarrytown and vicinity would be in attendance. Miss Belle was a country girl and very proud of her home. Such an important social affair and such a grand home ought to be written up in a proper manner in the local press.

Sam knew every young man in the town who was in love and the person of the opposite sex who had captivated him. He likewise knew every young woman who was in the same delightful predicament. He was acquainted with the state of Ezra's feelings toward Miss Leonard, and had a pretty good sized idea that the editor's love was returned. So the wily Samuel said:

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"Oh, come along! The young lady you admire most will be there, and if I were you I wouldn't let the other fellow steal a march on me by putting in an evening in her society without, at least, a suggestion that I was still in evidence. I'd want to be in the neighborhood to disturb some of his fine speeches."

Mr. Wilkins' homely and practical suggestions were evidently effective.

"All right; you come around at seven, and I'll be ready," was the quick answer and they parted.

The Striker residence was a fine country home, hid away amidst a wilderness of trees. There was one peculiar fact about the hill upon which the mansion stood. It was composed of a first-rate quality of gravel, indicating that the elevation had been formed by the action of water many centuries ago. A few hundred feet from where the Striker home stood there had been opened up a gravel pit, and thousands of wagon loads of gravel had been taken out of it some thirty or forty years ago to build the excellent turn-pikes and gravel roads that abounded in that part of Blackwood county. Underneath this deposit of gravel there was an impervious stratum of clay, called in local parlance "hard pan." After the gravel had been removed, there was left an unsightly hole several acres in extent, which had been filled up with water, making a beautiful little lake. By and by, the sod extended down to the water's edge. Flowers, trees and shrubbery grew up along its shores. This lakelet was not only a thing of beauty, but of usefulness as well. It furnished a constant supply of fresh, sparkling water for the farmer's animals and had been well stocked with fish. In winter, Mr. Striker filled his ice house with the crystal harvest that formed upon its surface.

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The farmer had built a neat little boathouse, and procured several handsome new boats, which furnished recreation for the family and their friends.

And now Miss Belle had gone beyond all her previous efforts and had arranged a masquerade skating party. It made no difference what 'twas called, however, for if Miss Belle Striker and her parents were behind any entertainment, it was sure to be good. There was no place in the vicinity of Quarry-town where the young folks could go and have a better time.

It was a magnificent winter's night. A quick drive in Sam's handsome new sleigh brought him and the editor to the front gate of the Striker home.

Sam, according to arrangement, brought the editor up before the genial hostess with a smile and this declaration:

"Well, you see I've brought him just as I said I would!"

"Indeed, Mr. Wilkins, you are an adept. And Mr. Howe, you are thrice welcome to our masquerade. It's something new to you perhaps, but I trust it will prove none the less entertaining for that," said Miss Striker in a tone that betokened genuine hospitality. The editor returned her salutation in his most courteous phrases.

Sam and Miss Belle were lovers, and of course, they had to step aside and exchange a few words *sotto voce*. Sam said something the import of which Mr. Howe could not quite distinguish, and Miss Belle's answer was:

"Yes; they are here; she and the doctor and Mrs. Leonard, and the young man from the city."

Then, notwithstanding his diligent efforts to eavesdrop (a thing he would not have thought of a mo-

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ment before) he could not further determine what she said, but he caught enough to know that Miss Striker was describing Aimee's costume. He caught the expressions "dressed *a la huntress*," "dark plume," "flesh-colored masque." Miss Aimee at the party! His heart beat high with anticipation. Find her he would were there several Dr. Leonards in the way. But another part of the conversation about "the young man from the city," and how elegantly **he** was dressed did not set so well.

Ezra and Mr. Wilkins proceeded to the lake, the icy surface of which, smooth and glossy, shone like a huge plate of silver in the starlight. There were a large number of skaters there already, gliding hither and yon, singly or in pairs and groups. Many of them were masqued, and very many handsome costumes were noted. A number of torches had been placed around the shore at regular intervals, and these gave just enough light to make the merry scene all the more interesting and romantic. Down by the boat house, there were at least a score of married people, among whom Ezra saw the prominent figure of Dr. Leonard. But Aimee and—and "the young man from the city," he could not see. Sam and the editor quickly donned their skates and away they flew. They soon parted, Mr. Wilkins to seek the companionship of Belle and the editor to hunt for Aimee. With the speed of the wind he glided from group to group and from person to person. He felt sure with the keen eyes of love he would recognize her in an instant. It would be a matter of intuition, as it were, the intuition of his sublime devotion! And sure enough! "There she is now!" he said to himself as a graceful skater flew by him. She was dressed "*a la huntress*." At least, in the limited light, and with

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his limited knowledge of feminine attire, he thought it must be that. There was a small cap placed upon her head, from which a "dark plume" gracefully arose. He, likewise, noticed that she wore a "flesh-colored masque." The young man ought, perhaps, to have made some allowance in anticipation of a mistake; for colors seen in starlight and torchlight are a trifle uncertain. But he did not. Instinct, the instinct of love was guiding him, and it was unerring.

"Ah, doctor, beshrew thee for a defeated wretch!" Here was the young man's opportunity. He quickly overtook the flying figure.

"Fair masquer!" he said gallantly, "seeing that thou skatest alone, I make bold thus to approach thee. Can I be thy companion whilst thou glidest over the frozen depths?"

The expressionless face looked up into his and a voice somewhat disguised, intentionally he thought, said kindly:

"Certainly, Mr. Howe, I shall be very glad. I see that you are a first rate skater. Come along."

And away they went. There stood the old doctor as they flew by, and he didn't seem a bit disturbed. Mr. Howe was unmasked, and of course, Dr. Leonard couldn't help recognizing him, and he must know his daughter's costume. And "the young man from the city" didn't put in his appearance at all. "Well," thought the young lover with a chuckle, "if they can stand it so complacently, I guess I can!"

He noticed another beautiful and graceful skater with Belle and Sam, and as they passed by, that fair masquer turned and looked somewhat attentively at Mr. Howe and his companion, but Ezra had no time for any other female, fair or otherwise, save the one at his side.

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"I know thee, gracious lady, I know thee well!" Mr. Howe ventured to say in his assumed medieval jargon between gasps, for the "gracious lady" was leading him the chase of his life.

"Are you quite sure you do, Mr. Howe?" was the muffled answer, still in plain language, followed by a sound suspiciously like a laugh.

"Precious Aimee!" said the happy lover to himself, "she thinks I haven't recognized her, and I'll just humor her in that notion for awhile."

Again, Sam and his two companions came by, and Mr. Wilkins said something to the editor which the latter didn't fully understand. It sounded like, "You're clean off!" Sam always would use slang. What did he mean, anyhow, Oh, well; no matter, the sententious Samuel would, doubtless, explain as they drove home. And once more he turned his whole attention to his skating companion. How the precious minutes went by, at least sixty of them!

At last Miss Belle announced to her guests that they should go to the house, where they must all remove their masques, and partake of a generous repast that had been prepared for them. It was a welcome proposition; for the healthful exercise and the pure, bracing air had given them a good appetite.

Several large rooms were soon filled with young folks. As they were passing into the house, a messenger came for Dr. Leonard, informing him that a boy in the neighborhood had broken his arm, and the doctor was compelled to take his departure at once. Ezra, still clinging to his fair Aimee as he supposed, went into the house. He noticed as soon as they had passed into the brilliantly lighted rooms that his companion's masque was not "flesh-colored" but white with painted cheeks. And he saw that her costume

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was not that of a fair huntress with bow and quiver and horn. But was a short, nondescript creation that represented nothing or nobody!

Glancing across the room where Miss Belle and Samuel were stationed he saw the same young lady that had been skating with them, and her masque was "flesh-colored," and out of her dainty little fur cap towered a "dark plume," and her costume,—it was the very perfection of exquisite grace and good taste—being of dark blue silk plush, ornamented at the lower edge of the short, trim skirt with a row of silver bangles! And a bow and quiver strapped across her shapely shoulders made one ejaculate without any explanation whatever, "A huntress!"

Just then there came the order from Miss Belle to unmasque and get acquainted, and the editor's companion quickly removed her masque, and he saw not Aimee Leonard's beautiful face but the more commonplace features of Susie Dunraven, a young lady of the village with whom Mr. Howe was scarcely acquainted!

The look of disappointment and—well, what shall we call it?—downright disgust! which overspread the editor's features was not very complimentary to Miss Dunraven, nor was it an evidence of any very great courtesy on Mr. Howe's part, but the young lady, who understood the situation, laughed heartily at Ezra's expense, and excused him from any further attendance upon her.

As soon as he could in all good conscience, Mr. Howe crept over to Sam and whispered very close in Mr. Wilkin's ear.

"Sam," he said in deep contrition, "Sam, do you know that I've made a confounded ass of myself?"

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And that gentleman cheerfully assented to the proposition, and said that he knew he had!

Miss Leonard had kept a close watch on her lover all the while, and had noticed the devoted attention he was giving Miss Dunraven. She hardly knew what to make of it until the masques were removed, and then it was plain to be seen that it was a case of mistaken identity. So far as **she** was concerned, she had made no mistake. Her father, her mother, Elbert Alison and herself had come in the family carriage. With the help of Miss Belle and the ingenious Samuel, Alison had been "worked off," so to speak, on another young lady who had been instructed to "entertain" him at all hazards until Miss Belle gave further orders. Mr. Alison was in consequence thereof safely "pocketed" and everything would have worked delightfully had not Ezra by his stupidity (as **he** called it!) spoiled everything.

But now, as good luck would have it, the doctor had gone and the young folks were free, and much of what had been lost in that evening's enjoyment might yet be retrieved. "When the cat's away the mice will play" and the adage will apply to young people as well as mice.

A moment after his remark to Sam, Ezra stepped to the side of his beloved one, where his egregious blunder was soon forgiven and forgotten. Together they went in to luncheon, together they sat down at the long, well-spread table, and together they spent the remainder of that evening, and there was no old ogre present to interfere with their pleasure in the slightest degree. And Mrs. Leonard, who had been present all the while not only did not offer any objection, but actually smiled upon their happiness. By and by, Belle and Sam were with them, and they

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were a merry group. And Mr. Elbert Alison—the author has actually lost sight of him and cannot at this writing inform the reader what did become of him. Probably, he put in the time exchanging experiences with Susie Dunraven.

Sam Wilkins always had such a pleasant way about him. He could think of so many good plans to please his friends, and, incidentally, please himself. The rogue didn't want to go home when Ezra did. He wanted to remain half an hour with Miss Belle after everybody else had gone home. And if you had known Miss Belle you wouldn't have blamed him so very much for that! So he said to Miss Aimee, as a sort of starter, the other two listening:

"If you could just get rid of Mr. Alison, I believe I have a suggestion to make."

"Why, Mr. Alison is not **my** guest, he is papa's!" quickly answered Miss Aimee. "I have had it out with him and he ought to understand the situation by this time. I have told him with as much kindness and courtesy as I could command that I could not receive his attentions longer."

"Oh, well, then," said Samuel in his genial manner, "if **that's** the way it stands, I'll tell you what you can do. Mr. Howe can have my sleigh and horse and drive Aimee home and the coachman can drive her mamma and Mr. Alison back!"

"Capital idea, Sam," said Ezra; "but, Sam, how'll you get home?"

"He can ride over with Mrs. Leonard and Mr. Alison," laughed Belle.

"Oh, it's only a mile," said Sam; "don't bother about me. I can walk for that matter."

"I must speak to mamma first," said the dutiful Aimee, and she immediately hunted up her mother,

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and returned at once with the latter's unqualified consent.

Shortly after, the guests began to depart, and the editor and Miss Leonard drove away in Sam Wilkin's elegant new sleigh, cosily tucked in his snug robes, and it was one of the most blissful drives of their whole lives!

CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE night of Miss Belle's party, about twelve o'clock, Ezra H. Howe returned to his sleeping apartments in the Balk Block, hard by the Augur office. His base burner was going at a merry clip and his rooms were warm and cozy, notwithstanding the zero weather without. His mind was as radiant as the glowing stove, and visions of the fair huntress floated through his imagination. He finally retired to rest, at least he thought at the time that he did. He must have been mistaken, however, for scarce a minute thereafter he found himself walking down a long shady lane with the maiden he adored—peerless Aimee! The trees were in full leaf, the flowers were all abloom, and the birds sang joyously. Never had his loved one appeared so beautiful, so divinely sweet! Mr. Howe himself was pleased to acknowledge, taking an estimate of his own mental and physical condition, that he never was in finer fettle. Those weird phantoms such as death and approaching sorrow, which are always present at our feasts, "had folded their tents like the Arabs and as silently stolen away." His happiness was absolutely without a care, his sky was without a cloud! It seemed that he and Aimee were together never more to part, and the sun would shine and the birds sing forever! And as they walked along over sod as soft as a velvet carpet, he poured the story of his wonderful love into her ears, and heard her sweetly and graciously consent to be his and there was no suggestion "until death do us part!" The conventionalities that had hedged them about were all gone, and he put his

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arms around her and kissed her again and again. Then he took her hand—such a shapely yet capable hand—in his and together they walked down along the lane. Going whither? He knew not, nor was it important that he should know.

At last the end of the lane appeared opening into a vast and splendid woodland, where the trees grew tall and straight and majestic and where the softest of breezes played among their green leaves the live-long day. Ezra saw that the lane continued down through the forest, and that it was lined on each side by giant oaks, forming an inviting vista, where the sun shining through the foliage above made a patchwork carpet of green and gold for his darling and himself to tread upon. He saw a gray squirrel or two run across their path, and whisk up some nearby tree with startled chatter. He noted birds in plumage of yellow and green and red flitting from branch to branch. Oh, it was such a beautiful scene and he was so happy! And the satisfying part about it all was, that he just knew—and yet nobody had ever told him—that it should never end!

They walked down further among the waving trees, and heard with intense satisfaction the whispering leaves overhead. And anon he gathered flowers for his precious Aimee—spring beauties and sweet-williams, and roses, and the plumed golden rod. Every flower of every season, spring, summer, autumn, grew all at once in this enchanting place, and Mr. Howe wasn't surprised about it, either. It was just a matter of course! He made a coronet of these buds and blossoms, intending to place them upon the shapely head of his betrothed. It was so dainty and elegant, and he laughed with great glee when he thought how beautiful and becoming it would be. He ap-

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proached his queen thus to crown her, when happening to look up, he saw Aimee no longer, but instead a sturdy wood chopper who stood with ax in hand.

"Come and watch me chop!" the woodsman said, and he began upon a neighboring tree with such wonderful, sounding strokes that the whole forest echoed and re-echoed with the din. And such execution, too, as that wood chopper had! Scarce a half dozen strokes had he made ere the great tree began swaying to and fro and then fell with a thunderous crash! bang! smash! The uproar was almost deafening.

"Hurrah!" shouted Ezra; "you're a good one! Let me chop awhile!" And the wonderful woodsman turned over his ax with a smile as sweet and engaging as Aimee's. Indeed, he had to take a second look to tell whether it was really Aimee again or the wood chopper. He had been fooled once before you know, and he wasn't very well up in disguises! It was the woodsman, he was quite sure of that, and yet somehow or other he thought he loved that wood chopper about as well as anybody, his smile was so pleasant, and he looked so like Aimee when he smiled.

Ezra took the ax in hand and began. Wonderful! His blows sounded like discharge of heavy artillery and how the woods echoed in unison with the noise. What facility Ezra had, too! Two strokes, sometimes three, and the great trunk would hit the earth with a sounding thump and then the roar would set in.

The smashing noise became so loud and so oft repeated, that to tell the truth about it, Mr. Howe just simply waked up! He raised himself upon his elbow and listened. He heard the sounds of breaking glass and smashing of sonorous barrels. He leaned from his bed and ran to the open window. The sky was

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clear with but a small rim of moon newly arisen. It was 2 a. m. by the town clock, as he could plainly see. The noise undoubtedly came from a short distance up the street north. It was just about in the vicinity of O'Leary's. Several people were walking just under his window talking and laughing loudly.

"Hey there!" shouted Ezra, "what's the meaning of all that noise up the street?"

"Hello! Editor Howe!" a voice returned, "what's it to ye? Stick yer head in the winder an' go to sleep, an' mind yer own business, an' ye'll live longer, at least ye won't die so quick!"

"Yes," derisively shouted another, "poke yer head in there ur ye'll ketch the pneumony fever an' the grave robbers'll git ye!"

"An' wouldn't he be a fine subject," laughed a third, "fur them medical doctors to saw up on one o' them dessicatin' tables?" A roar of ribald glee greeted this last sally, and the group passed out of view around a corner.

Ezra ran back hastily, donned his clothes, seized his revolver and sallied forth like a knight of old in search of adventure. He ran down his stairway four steps at a time. He met another group coming from the vicinity where the confusion had reigned. He leveled his revolver which glittered ominously in the moonlight, full and fair upon the approaching figures, none of whom he could recognize.

"Halt!" he shouted in the stern tones of a veritable soldier. The men at a glance saw that he was armed and ready, and they came to a standstill.

"Now, tell me, I command you what you've been doing and whose property you've been destroying at this unseemly hour, or I'll let the moonlight shine through some of you!"

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"Ah, Mr. Howe," said one of the men in a disgusted tone, "It's a pity ye can't mind yer own business! The people of Quarrytown are destroying the dirty old saloon. That's what it is! Now, go to bed an' keep yer mouth shet if ye want to stand in with these people!"

"Who are you?" demanded Ezra, moving upon the group with sudden determination. One of those foremost raised his arm and hurled something at Mr. Howe that whistled within an inch of his left ear. It was a beer bottle, and had it landed on that gentleman's head, it would probably have disfigured him for life. Howe was plucky, and he immediately opened fire upon the group in dead earnest. They took to their heels and soon disappeared down a nearby alley.

The editor then ran in the direction of O'Leary's business rooms, hoping to prevent any further vandalism, but he was too late. He found upon reaching the place that every pane of glass in both doors and windows had been broken out, sash and all. On the inside the bottles, glasses, decanters and everything else breakable had shared the same fate. Two or three barrels of whisky and four or five kegs of beer had had their heads knocked in and their odorous contents spilled upon the floor. In short, there had been a complete wreckage of the saloon and its contents.

O'Leary had been away in the city that night and did not return until the 8:30 train next morning. He viewed the destruction that had been wrought upon his property with great consternation, and "domned" the people of the town with his usual enthusiasm in such matters. Nevertheless, he secured the services of a competent glazier from the city, who quickly repaired his broken doors and windows. Next he laid in a full supply of glassware. And, moreover, in a

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few hours thereafter, the big, gray horses with their gold-mounted harness from the X Y Z brewery drove up in front of O'Leary's door and unloaded bigger barrels and more numerous kegs than ever, and the genial Patrick was "at home" to his friends and patrons once more.

In the Augur that week, in the editorial column thereof, there appeared a gentle remonstrance. It was well-worded, neat and courteous, and had, by the way, a tinge of the really classical about it. The young editor began his editorial by quoting from Shakespeare, in this wise:

It is the curse of kings to be attended
By slaves who take their humors for a warrant,
To break within the bloody house of life,
And on the winking of authority to understand a law!

And so it was to some extent even in Quarrytown, he suggested, and among the village's very best people. It was **their** misfortune to be attended by a lawless, irresponsible **few**, who, hoping to court favor with the prevailing sentiment in the community, would do such deeds as caused the wrecking of Mr. O'Leary's place. He was sure that the leaders in the anti-saloon movement had had nothing whatever to do with such a wrongful act. He would take the responsibility himself of saying **that** much for them and the good reputation of the place. He hoped that the honorable and moral people of the town would denounce such an act of vandalism and lawlessness as it deserved, and that they would show those who committed it that there was no support, either moral or otherwise, for such lawless men.

It was not a very long article, but it suggested a great deal more than it said. From the standpoint of good policy it was the most stupendous error he had ever made. The newspaper man felt the "freeze"

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set in the very next day. It is difficult to describe just how the people made their displeasure known. It was certainly not in talking about it; for if they ever said a word about the article it was certainly not in his hearing. They were as severely polite as ever. He wished he hadn't published the editorial, and then he was glad he had.

On the following Sunday night, the Rev. Avery Dorchester preached a sermon. Of course, Ezra wasn't there. He worshiped at the Presbyterian church as has been said. If Mr. Howe had been a listener to Dr. Dorchester, the sermon probably never would have been preached. In that sermon the minister denounced the editor's position, and assured his hearers that if he had **his way** **he'd** blow up every hell-hole in the United States tomorrow with dynamite!

The preacher was not, perhaps, as broad as he might have been, and very prone "to tear a passion to tatters, to very rags." There was, however, some "method in his madness," and it was better politics than Mr. Howe had shown. He knew it made him solid with his flock and enabled him better to collect his salary. The people didn't feel, at the best, that they were getting value received in the good man's efforts, and he found it necessary to administer strong stimulants in order to get the amount which he considered his due.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A SHORT time after the events described in the two previous chapters, Dr. Leonard received a curt note from Lawyer Ellsworth Alison, the father of the young man heretofore mentioned, asking the doctor to drop into his office the next time he came to the city. It was not long after the reception of the note that the physician availed himself of the invitation.

The office of Alison and Ames was situated in one of the most important districts of the city and occupied the entire second floor of a large building.

The firm, while not the best nor the most famous in the Hoosier capital, had outstripped many abler firms in this particular, to-wit, that each partner had saved a large fortune from his practice. The elder member was quoted by Bradstreet as being worth in excess of \$300,000, and his property was not in his wife's name, either. He lived in an elegant mansion on Monument Boulevard in the most aristocratic portion of the city. The Alisons, so far as society was concerned, were "it." They could enter and be welcome in any circle they might see fit to invade. It was really a condescension for Elbert to court a country girl down at Quarrytown, whose father was worth only a paltry fifty or seventy-five thousand dollars and the elder Alison had felt it all along. But, then, she was a fine young woman, and himself and her father had been old friends, and they had agreed that their children should wed whenever they should reach the estate of man and woman. So far as Elbert was concerned, he could capture most any young lady on

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whom he might see fit to place his fancy. For instance, there was Miss Genevieve Gaston, across the way. **Her** father was worth a cool million. **She** was very anxious to secure the hand of Alison, junior, in marriage. In fact, she had made personal efforts in that direction. But then, the old lawyer was compelled to admit as he sat in his easy chair that morning that the difference between Miss Gaston and Miss Leonard, in beauty, in intelligence and in those qualities which make a woman the queen of her home was almost infinite, and this superior advantage was in favor of the latter. He **would** say (to himself) that he preferred Miss Leonard as a daughter-in-law over Miss Gaston, even though the latter's father was worth a score of times more money than the doctor. That admission was pretty liberal for Mr. Alison, for that he was a rather sordid old soul. He was actually willing to offset Miss Aimee against nine hundred and fifty thousand dollars! Surely, no one could expect more than that of **him**. He had plenty and Elbert was his only heir. He knew that Aimee, with her peerless beauty, would grace and adorn any circle of society into which even the Alisons might see fit to introduce her. In truth, he knew that he as well as his son would be very proud of her. So he had given his consent for Elbert to go down and woo and win this rural maiden. That was all that would be necessary, to be sure.

But what was all this he had been hearing? Could it be possible that the foolish girl was actually resisting so brilliant a marriage, and after he had given his consent, too? Had she really in the absence of her father slipped away from his son and ridden home with a far less desirable young man? He considered it almost a **personal** insult! What did John Leonard mean

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thus to permit Elbert to be treated with contumely? He would give that gentleman a piece of his mind, that he would. So he sat down immediately and indited him a letter, the one that has been referred to, without calling in one of the young lady stenographers to assist him.

And in a few days thereafter, Dr. Leonard appeared in the lawyer's private office. The attorney's greeting was not as frank and genial as usual. There was ice in his voice and frost on his beetling brows. He was so formal and so particular in utterance, too. One would almost lose his respect for the old physician to note the change that had come upon him since he had entered the presence of the lawyer. At Quarrytown he was haughty, dignified, and overbearing. In this man's office his demeanor was that of a person most apologetic, most humble.

"Dr. Leonard," the rich attorney began, after the rubbish of formality had been decently cleared away. Then he paused, and cleared his throat with a vehemence that rang in the listener's ear. "Dr. Leonard," he repeated, "I have given my consent for my son to call upon your daughter with a view toward matrimony. I was of opinion that it was our mutual understanding that our children should wed."

The doctor said contritely that that was **his** understanding, too.

"Then how did it happen that my son was treated so discourteously on the occasion of his last visit to your home when he went with yourself and daughter to the party?" continued the attorney. "I refer to the incident at the-the-what the deuce do they call it—the masquerade skating social."

The doctor, in a low, subdued tone explained that he had been called away to attend a boy whose arm

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had been broken but a few minutes before, and that while he was away the young editor had driven his daughter home from the Striker residence. He further said that he had forbidden the young man to his house and had thought that any intimacy between him and his daughter was at an end. That as long as he, the doctor, had been at the party, the young fellow had paid the most assiduous attention to another young lady which had thrown him entirely off his guard. He would have refused to go and wait upon the boy with the broken arm, had he feared that young Alison would be deserted in the manner he was. He was so submissive and appeared to be so deeply disappointed that the lawyer felt it safe to administer a little more corrective.

"I don't want you to think, doctor, that **your** daughter is the only young lady to whom my son might pay his respects." The emphasis on the word "your" was particularly unpleasant in the physician's ears. It appealed strongly to his latent manhood. After all, was not **his** Aimee the peer of any woman Alison, junior, or Alison, senior, had ever known or ever would know? And come to think about it, he didn't care so very much whether his daughter married at all or not. More than once he was tempted to smash the slate and have done with it.

But then Alison's three hundred thousand, and his brownstone front, and his style, these were not to be cast away too lightly. The old physician had cultivated pride to the exclusion of other better and nobler qualities, and now those qualities were too weak to save that very pride itself from further humiliation and insult. The doctor swallowed down his rising choler, and admitted that he was quite sure that there were many admirable young women that would be

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only too glad to receive the attentions of Alison, the younger.

"This young fellow, what's his name? Oh, yes, Howe. He seems to have the inside track in your daughter's good graces. Can't you find some way to distance him?"

Again the attorney's words grated harshly. Those race-course expressions did not suit the father, especially when they had any preference to his refined and beautiful Aimee. Did his old friend mean to insult him? It was hard to control himself. He looked at the speaker with a better eye and a clearer face than he had shown since their talk began. The lawyer met his gaze calmly, and there was the appearance of the utmost good faith in his countenance.

"Yes, I believe there is," he said, replying to the last thought, that of distancing the editor, and quickly seized an opportunity of setting forth some of the plans that he had been forming in his mind. "You know that there is a big saloon war on hand in Quarrytown, and everybody's gone crazy over a little doggery that is run by a man named O'Leary?"

"I have been reading a little about it in the daily papers," replied the attorney. "Didn't they go in recently and smash all his bottles and empty his barrels?"

"Indeed they did, and this editor kind of took sides against the people and denounced the wrecking of the saloon."

"You don't say so?" exclaimed the attorney. "But I'll never think any the worse of him for that. But go on, I'm interested in the development of your plan."

"Well, another such break as that and the temperance people will drive him out of town."

"Or hang him on a lamp post!" suggested the

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other. "Such bigotry as those people possess is liable to cause them to do most anything. I wonder you don't have the old Salem witchcraft times back in your village."

Dr. Leonard winced, for he really felt that the town which he claimed as a home was a good one and could give other places he might mention some valuable lessons in morals and in other things as well. His companion was interested in what the doctor had to say, and hastened to take a shorter cut by judicious questioning.

"So you propose to open up the flood-gates of bigotry and prejudice, and overwhelm the young blood, do you?" There was an element about this insinuation that didn't please the old physician. It was almost a covert sneer.

"Well-er-well!" the doctor stammered, taking a start toward justifying his position, or using softer language for the expression of the same, but come to think about it, that **was** just what he was proposing to do.

"I might as well say yes; why not?" he asked, coming back at the lawyer fairly and squarely. "Would there be any crime in having some one persuade that greenhorn to make another attack upon the people?"

"Oh, no crime, no **crime**," responded the other with grim emphasis. "It would be all right legally, and you would be entirely free from responsibility. And, doubtless, you would be successful, too. I don't know what I'd run from more quickly than a town full of just such fanatics as those. But, doctor, why,—why don't you persuade them to shoot him, and have done with it?"

Dr. Leonard looked up quickly at his companion to see if he were really in earnest. The attorney could

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restrain himself no longer, and laughed heartily. He had evidently gotten over his pique, and was disposed to poke fun at the man from Quarrytown, and his town as well. The doctor grinned, though he failed to appreciate the fun in the lawyer's language. To a Quarrytown citizen, when he was gunning for a saloon, the combining of a whole community against one person was a perfectly honorable and proper way to get rid of an obnoxious institution. And why not? The old lawyer was so used to cross-examining folks that he often put a more poignant emphasis in his words than he intended.

The doctor then explained the situation in Quarrytown. He told of the trials and difficulties the people had experienced in attempting to rid their community of the saloon, and said that they were determined to win in the struggle, hit or miss, law or no law. He said that young Howe had already estranged the people, and that the tide of prejudice was now running high against him. If, therefore, he could be induced, the next time any depredations were committed on the saloon, to speak in stronger and more unmeasured tones, the feeling against him would become so intense that he would probably be forced to leave town, between two days, and would hardly find it agreeable to return even on a visit. Dr. Leonard pledged himself to keep his daughter away from the young man until his ruin would be complete, and he should thus be compelled to depart. The old lawyer listened gravely. He was not possessed of any deep moral sentiment, yet the idea of taking an unfair advantage of anyone was not wholly to his liking. But then, the young fellow **was** in the way, and had to be gotten rid of, and, possibly, the doctor's method was as fair as any other that was

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available. But then, he still saw another obstacle, and so said:

"I don't know, doctor, just how much sentiment your daughter possesses, but if they are really lovers, and I judge they are from the evidence in the case, and your daughter is like many women, the more he was persecuted the more she would love him and cling to him. But I suppose there is no better plan than the one you suggest. One thing is certain at least. If he stays around Quarrytown the jig's up. If, perhaps, you could get him away and he doesn't come back, there may be some hope. But then, you may be able to force him to leave town, and you may destroy his business. But suppose Miss Aimee insists upon going too? There are plenty of parsons who can be found to marry them, I warrant."

The doctor hooted at the idea. He had supreme confidence in his authority and control over his daughter. With the young man away—"out of sight, out of mind," you know, he felt sure she would soon forget him and then he would persuade her to marry the handsome young Alison. As good a judge of human nature as he was and as well acquainted with his own child as he ought to have been, he had no conception of the depth and power of that young woman's affection. Even the old lawyer had a much better estimate of Aimee's mental and physical make-up, and he shook his head skeptically.

"The truth is," Alison said, "if I could get my son to abandon the idea of winning your girl to be his wife, I should gladly do so. I doubt his ultimate success, notwithstanding your help, and I still believe this in the face of your great confidence. But he is so infatuated with her that I actually fear that if he loses her it will do him injury for life. Why, the next day

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after he came home from his last visit to Quarrytown, he did not come down to breakfast, and wife and I went up to see what had become of our baby boy—he's always that to us, you know—and we found him weeping bitterly, and more than that, he had not closed his eyes in sleep during the entire night.

“‘Oh, father, father!’ he cried, ‘I can't give her up! She is so beautiful, and I love her so!’

“I never have been touched so deeply and I recognized at that time a thing I had not been brought face to face with before, that right there in my son's life was a serious situation, a serious trouble.

“If you succeed in getting rid of this young editor, and all goes well, and you think it advisable, I will come down and we will get the twain together and see if we cannot bring about an amicable understanding between them. Believe me, doctor, I do admire your daughter, and would rather have her as my daughter-in-law than any young woman with whom I am acquainted. I wish you and my dear boy success in this affair, but, sincerely, I doubt if ever you attain it.”

Dr. Leonard pounded the floor with his cane. He had tyrannized over his patient and obedient Aimee, oh, so long. Had she not “trembled with fear at his frown” all these years? The idea of her actually resisting and overcoming him in the end was not to be entertained for a moment. He **would** succeed. His daughter would do, **must** do as he said.

The change in the old lawyer's demeanor was gratifying and encouraging. It had now become a regular heart to heart talk between old and esteemed friends. He was deeply touched at Mr. Alison's affecting narrative and the picture of his son weeping and wailing for his matchless daughter touched his heart

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(he thought it was his heart) unti' there was a mist before his eyes. But ah! it touched his pride more than that! It was so gratifying, so complimentary. He would see whether Aimee obeyed her father or not, and he took his leave feeling that he and his old friend, notwithstanding a few petty differences not worthy of being mentioned, had, as always, reached an amicable conclusion.

CHAPTER XIX.

IT was Saturday night, about the middle of March, and nearing the keystone hour. The village of Quarrytown was wrapped in a slumber so quiet and profound that not even one lone canine had been left to bay the moon. Especially was this true in the vicinity of Mr. Patrick O'Leary's place of business. This gentleman, by the way, had taken his departure for the city on the afternoon train to be gone, as was his wont, until Monday, and had left in charge of his affairs his bartender, a red-eyed individual, whose only designation throughout the village was "Buckshot." The function of closing up had been performed by Buckshot, since which time even the echoes themselves had gone to sleep.

Over on the highway leading into the village, a horse and spring wagon had just arrived from the city, and the vehicle's occupants had leaped to the ground.

"Her-re's the pla-ace to hitch the auld plug, Tiddy," said one of the dark figures, his tones being somewhat muffled. With this he drew the horse against the fence and fastened him.

"How fur will we haft ter walk now?" asked the other.

"Oh, not so domned fur as yees might t'ink. The town ain't mooch bigger 'n a postage stamp! We'll just slide down an alley near-r her-re, and it's only a few hundred paces. But we'll have to be aisy about it, that we will. Oi don't want anny av thim pable her-re to say me!" Then the speaker fumbled under the spring wagon seat.

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"What ye lookin' fur?" asked his companion, noting the action.

"Me box, begorra! me fir-re boog! Did yees iver say wan, Tiddy?"

"No; I thought a fire bug was a man, except o' course, when it's a real lightning bug ur somethin' like that."

"Wa-al sometimes it is, and at ithers it ain't. This time, Tiddy, it's a paste-boord box with coal ile and cotton, and a can'le stuck into it, be dad! Whin yees light yees can'le, yees have time to run annyhow a full quar-ter befoor yees auld box goes to bla-azin'!"

"An' ye air goin' to burn the buildin' down, air ye, Pat?" asked the other figure, as they started away together, the first speaker with a bundle under his arm.

"Shoor! Phat have Oi been tellin' yees? Who'll iver t'ink 'twas Pathrick? These domned fanatics smashed me up befor, and begorra! each wan av thim will t'ink the ither did the wor-rk this time. Oi've put ivery dollar av inshoorance on the auld ranch Oi can carry, and besides the byes in the city and the thrade iverywhere will help yees auld friend to bear his sad and hivvy loss! Tiddy, can yees tell how Pathrick can make money betther than that?"

"No, Pat, no; but the poor fool of a woman who owns the buildin', what will she do?"

"Arrah, now, me bye, yees ar-re away behind. Didn't yees know that Pathrick himself owns the buildin'? Bought it betther than wan wake ago. Paid twinty hundred 'Daddies' fur the auld shack!"

"Why, Pat, I didn't know ye ever had that much 'dough!' "

"Ah, wa-al," answered the other with a chuckle, "Oi don't ginerally have me pocket buke with that mooch in it, but yees know the thrade and the byes

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in the city, they'se kind-a taken up me cause, and they put up the most av that phat Oi paid the poor fule woman. She throubled the life out av me. She wanted to give me back the whool year's rint, but Divil the bit would Oi take it. She said she couldn't go to choorch anny mor-re, and not wan av her neighbors would spake to her or so mooch as notice her at all, at all. And bedad! she cried and worried around me until Oi could nayther slape nor ate anny betther than she said she could. But it was a good thing f'r auld Pathrick all right. It made me so domned mad that Oi just wint to the city and jumped on the byes and the thrade f'r all there was in sight, and Oi got it! Whin Oi come back that night Oi bought the buildin'!"

"Ah," said the other, "I see how 'tis, Pat."

"And yees can just bet the thrade's got plinty mor-re wher-re that come from. And ivery domned t'ing that happens to me down her-re, they'll be shoor the poor fule fanatics ar-re doin' it, and Pathrick will rake in the chips in the ind."

"Yes, yes; Pat, ye've got a wise ole head on yer shoulders. I can do a job like this as well as anybody, but I can't plan like ye kin. That's the reason why I'm always so poor, I reckon."

"Wa-al, wa-al, me bye, yees'll not be anny poorer f'r comin' down her-re with me this avenin', Tiddy. Yees have always been a throe friend and niver tauld anny tales out av school."

By this time the two men had gone some distance from the spot where their horse was hitched, and by keeping in the shadow of a dark alley had reached the back door of Mr. O'Leary's place of business. Silently applying a key the door was opened and they crept in. They had not been in the room long when they returned carrying a large, bulky, but evidently not

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very heavy object between them. A closer look showed it to be the refrigerator. This they carried into the alley and the door was closed behind them.

"Hauld on!" exclaimed one of the men, "bedad, Oi've left me licenses behind!" and he hastily returned into the dark portal, to come back in scarcely a minute with the article he sought.

Ezra H. Howe had business in the city that afternoon, and he saw fit to drive rather than take the train for the reason that there was no way of getting home sooner than 8:30 Monday morning, a train at that time being the first one that stopped at the village. He was detained until late, and having a score of miles to drive it was approaching one o'clock when he reached the outskirts of Quarrytown. He passed a horse hitched to a spring wagon, and went but a few paces till he observed something approaching, meeting him on the highway. He was outside the radius of the lights of the village, and the moon had just crept above the horizon in the east. What in the world was it? It was "a shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark." It looked like it might be a book case or a kitchen safe on legs, and it approached with that peculiar amble noted in the circus elephant. And it persisted in coming on with measured tread. Mr. Howe's horse was standing on its hind legs pawing the air and snorting with fright. Mr. Howe thought he heard a voice proceeding somewhere from the object's bowels, say:

"Kape right, Tiddy, let this domned auld horse run off! It's the asyest way out av the scra-ape!"

Ezra shouted to the whatever-it-was to stop, but it stayed not its coming in the slightest. The horse reared and plunged more fearfully than ever. Suddenly the animal wheeled to the left, and the move-

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ment jerked one of the lines out of Mr. Howe's hands, and away they went flying down a lane away from the highway. The editor was helpless either to check the animal's wild pace or control its course. He felt, however, that he could ride as fast as the horse could run, and remained in his seat, speaking to the animal as it sped along. He was sure if no accident befell them the horse would eventually wind up in front of its own home. And in this surmise he was correct; for in less than half an hour it stopped in the livery stable doorway, whence Mr. Howe had obtained the rig. He found the stable open, lighted and everybody astir. He was on the verge of telling the attendants about his runaway accident. But they had a more exciting bit of news to tell first.

"Just been out to a fire!" said one.

"A fire? where?" asked Mr. Howe.

"Haven't you heard about it? The saloon's burned to the ground. It's a total loss! The temperance people fixed O'Leary good and proper this time!" Mr. Howe fell right into this way of thinking and never stopped to consider any other proposition, nor did it occur to him to connect the object he saw coming down the highway with the destruction of the saloon in any way.

Everybody, in fact, believed that the fire had been kindled by the anti-saloon people. Notwithstanding the earnest protest which the leaders made against being charged with having done the deed, one-half, at least, of the villagers believed that the active anti-saloon folks knew all about the burning. The town had now begun to attain great notoriety, and had reached the feature departments in the big city dailies, where long articles, profusely illustrated, had found their way. The universal opinion was that the tem-

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perance element, in their misguided zeal, had committed the act, and had added the crime of arson to their list of deeds done in the name of truth and for the betterment of society.

At once, a beautiful new building began to arise, and it is a most accurate figure of speech to say, out of the ashes of the former one. The previous building had been a one story, with a large room in front and a smaller room behind. The new building was similar to the old one in size and arrangement, but was much more handsome and modern. A large force of carpenters was sent down from the city and the new structure was put up very quickly.

In a few weeks, Mr. O'Leary was ensconced behind a brand-new bar with the most elegant fixtures, dispensing drinkables to the thirsty with great pride. He was in finer spirits than his friends had ever seen him.

James Seymour was one of Mr. O'Leary's first visitors on the day of the latter's grand opening. Pat had gone over every detail of his new place and had pointed out all of its advantages over the old house. And they had reached the new, brass-mounted, mahogany-finished refrigerator. And Pat was trying to lead Jim's attention away from that to some new and "illegant" glassware.

"Hello, Pat," said Seymour, "Why, I'm durned if ye haven't got a beer-cooler jist like yer old one!"

"Yis," responded Patrick, nervously, "only it's a littel finer wan, though."

"No, by Gosh! Pat, it is the old one!"

"Ah, now, Jimmie, yees a-foolin'! Don't yees know the ither wan was burned up in the auld house!"

"I did think so, Pat, but this is the same cooler sure's you're a foot high!"

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Mr. O'Leary was red-faced and annoyed. He tried to call his friend's attention elsewhere, but the subject was too important to Mr. Seymour. He had made a discovery.

"Phat makes yees t'ink it's the same auld cooler, Jimmie?"

"Pat look here; I'll show ye! One day when I was standin' here, an' you an' I had been talkin', and you had stepped over yander to wait on a cigar customer, I took my knife,—I don't know what made me do it!—an' made a mark here, jest beside this hinge, see it? Shore as ye live, Pat O'Leary, this is the same identical cooler!"

"Plaze now, Jimmie," said the proprietor in a low, pleading tone, "don't yees be tellin' anny such bosh as that, nor showin' the byes the mar-rk. Yees'll git yees auld friend into thr-rubble. Av coorse, it can't be the same wan, now Jimmie, yees know it can't! And besides, the new wan is just as likely to git a scr-ratch in the same pla-ace, now Jimmie, isn't it? Let's take a dhrap or two of some rale, illegant, auld whisky!"

Nothing appealed to Mr. Seymour with more eloquence than "some rale illegant, auld whisky," and he forgot, in the ecstasy of the moment, the subject of the beer cooler.

As he stood before the bar and quaffed the second glass which Mr. O'Leary had so quickly proffered, he glanced up and noticed that Mr. O'Leary's framed license hung upon the wall in its accustomed place. Jim didn't really want to trap his old friend a second time.

"Hello, Pat, I see ye've got a copy o' yer license a'ready."

"No, Jimmie;" said Patrick, right glad to see

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that the shrewd fellow's mind had been drawn away from the previous painful subject, "It's the same auld licenses Oi've always had."

"Ah," said Seymour, coolly pouring out his third drink of the "illegant" truck. "How does that happen, Patrick? I thought yer license was burned up in yer old house."

"Why yees say, Jimmie, Oi had the good sinse to take thim with me to the city that afthernocn," replied Mr. O'Leary.

"Oh, come off, Pat," said the other with a grimace, and shrug of the shoulders; "what ye givin' me? Didn't I see it hanging on the wall that very same night, in that very frame the night of the fire after you had gone? Yes sir; I noticed it not ten minutes before Buckshot closed up the ranch an' went home!"

"Wa-al, now, Jimmie, kape yees domned mouth shut, and yees shall niver want f'r drinks, nor chips nor even money as long as I sthay her-re!"

"Oh, I didn't intend to 'blab,' but it kinder makes me tired to hear you an' ever'body else harpin' bout the temperance fanatics! I don't like the d—d cranks, an' they don't like me, but I'm in favor o' fair play!"

"Sh-sh! don't talk so loud, now, Jimmie plaze, and begorra! Oi'll promise yees **niver** to say wan wor-rd again about the domned fanatics a-bur-rnin' me saloon, niver!"

CHAPTER XX.

EDITOR HOWE, as has been said, was among the number of those who believed that the temperance faction, in an excess of enthusiasm, had set fire to the whisky shop. Past events, such as have been described, would tend to give color to such a view. The conduct of the citizens themselves on the night of the fire, being so successful, as indeed they were, in saving every other building except that one, also, gave further support to that belief.

However, had he been left to himself, while he still retained such a conviction as to the origin of the fire, it is hardly probable that he ever would have given public utterance to such an opinion. He knew how the people had resented what had been said before. So, as a matter of prudence, he would, doubtless, have decided not to make any reference to the arson save in the way of a news item. He greatly deplored the act of which he believed them guilty, and the fact that the same had been done under the guise of temperance and reform only made the occurrence all the more hideous and criminal. He would have kept this resolution inviolate had he not received unexpected encouragement from one or two whom he considered pillars in the temperance cause in Quarrytown.

Dr. Leonard had prepared to put into execution his plans for producing an open rupture between the so-called better element and the editor. The burning of the saloon soon after furnished the very best opportunity he could have desired. The doctor was more or less acquainted with the inner doings of the

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temperance committee and knew that none of them had been either principal or accessory to the deed. If now he could, by any means, cause the young man to accuse the temperance folks with being the authors of the crime then, in his opinion, the young man's financial ruin, at least, would be complete. There would be no longer any use for him to remain in Quarrytown, for his chances of making a livelihood would be gone, even if the people did not do a more reckless thing than just to cease their patronage of his newspaper. So his plan was, as has been set forth, to encourage Mr. Howe in criticizing the people and accusing them of having burned the building occupied by Patrick O'Leary.

The doctor did not always do things in an open and manly way, nor did his plans have, in every instance, an exact calculation of cause and effect. He saw all that was coarse and rancorous among the temperance people, but the sturdy devotion to truth and principle which existed in the bosoms of some he did not see, nor could he appreciate. The doctor sometimes worked underneath the surface in a most cunning and treacherous manner, and he had come to believe that all men were more or less built upon the same model as himself. He was not only skillful in carrying into execution his own schemes, but was an adept in the selection of persons through whom he saw fit to operate. This time he called into his office one of the most prominent and officious temperance workers in the whole town, whose name was Frank Grote. The reader is well aware that in a community where vice is popular, there are many apparently good men who are adherents of vice. On the other hand, in a town where temperance is so popular, there are men, not of the highest character,

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who are active in their opposition to the saloon. Grote was an example of the latter class. He was probably thirty-five years of age, well-to-do, a leader among a certain class, and, while in some particulars shrewd and cunning, at the same time was bold and forward, often pushing himself into situations and places where most modest men would hesitate to go. It has been said: "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread!" and this expression aptly describes Grote. He was, withal, an ignorant man, and, as is usually the case, obtained his ideas and inspiration from some one whom he considered well-informed and capable. Dr. Leonard was Grote's guiding star, and he believed in and obeyed the doctor implicitly. On the other hand, the old physician had learned that Grote was a safe person through whom he could set his cunning plans afloat. This morning the doctor began the conversation thus:

"Frank, you know this fellow who publishes the little thumb paper here in town, don't you?" Of course, Grote knew him. Nobody was a stranger to Grote, and so he assented.

"Well, he is disposed to pay some attention to my daughter, and, I am sorry to say, he is meeting with more favor from her than I ever imagined she would bestow on any man in opposition to my wishes."

The old man appeared to be bored when he made this confession, but it had to come.

"Yes; doctor," agreed Grote, picking up his ears and giving perfect attention.

"Do you know what I want? I want that fellow run out of town. At least I want him submitted to such disgrace and ignominy that he'll be compelled to leave."

"I don't blame you one bit. I never liked him much myself." Grote had already conceived a dislike

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for the editor at the mere suggestion of his sponsor.

"You remember," the doctor continued, gratified that his friend caught on so readily, "when the people went into the saloon and smashed up the furniture and the bottles, he had something to say against that way of doing, and, in fact, made a pronounced criticism against the people themselves. You know as well as I do how keenly the temperance people resented what was said in his little paper. At the time it well-nigh caused them to boycott him, along with O'Leary and some others." The speaker was noting the effect his words were producing on his friend's mind.

"Yes; that's so, Doc, I remember," and his words rang with the emphasis of perfect assent.

"Now, Frank, I shouldn't be at all surprised if he isn't at this moment possessed with the belief that the burning of the saloon was, likewise, done by the anti-saloon element."

"'Spect he is, Doc!" declared Grote.

"And if he is," continued the doctor, "a very little encouragement will cause him to come out in an article this very week, taking the position that this deed was done by our folks, and then proceed to score them soundly for so doing. You know how the people are wrought up over the accusations now being made by O'Leary and his followers. I guess the trouble is," the doctor observed with a sly smile, "that Patrick stole a march on them, and did just what they were going to do, but did it first!"

"Oh, I don't think they would a-burnt him out!" objected Grote.

"Well, they are terribly angry at the charges made by this blatant scoundrel, and if the editor follows them up in his paper, his days of usefulness are

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over in this community, and he might as well pack his grip and leave town. Indeed, the people may assist him in going."

"That's no joke," Grote replied. "They are terrible hot now because folks everywhere are laying the burning of the saloon on to them, when it's dead right that O'Leary himself did it in order to bleed the liquor organizations. They ain't a going to stand much from that fellow at this time."

"Now, Frank," continued the subtle old physician, "I know you can help me work this scheme to get rid of the fellow. If we let him alone he may have enough sense to keep his mouth shut about the temperance people burning the saloon. For fear that he may remain silent, however, I want you to go into his office and just denounce the whole business as an outrage and a disgrace to the town, and encourage him to come out this week and criticize the temperance contingent from top to bottom, because of such an act of vandalism. Do you catch on?"

Mr. Grote readily assented that he did and offered no objection from principle or otherwise to the doctor's proposal.

"He regards you—and so does everybody else,"—went on the physician, "as one of the prominent anti-saloon workers, and I have never told him," again the doctor smiled slyly, "about the champagne you drank nor how jolly you became at the last state convention."

"You never told anybody about that around here, did you?" quickly inquired Grote, becoming more interested than ever; "if you did it will destroy my influence entirely!"

"No, no; of course not," the doctor hastened to say, by way of assuring his friend. Then he went

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along his former trend once more. "And if you, in his presence, denounce the burning of the saloon as a great crime and disgrace and lay it on the temperance people, he will, more than likely, take his cue from you and open up on them with at least enough rancor to produce the effect I desire. Tell him that I and many others look upon this last act as a shame and a blot upon the fair name of our town. I think that is all that will be needed." The doctor chuckled at the success his plan was likely to have.

Half an hour later the doctor's minion burst into the Augur office fairly beside himself with counterfeited indignation and self-importance.

"It's an outrage! It's a shame!" he shouted waving his arms. "It ought to be denounced in the very strongest terms! Mr. Editor, you should lay about you right and left! Think of the name this town will have!"

"Mr. Grote," exclaimed the innocent Ezra, nearly blown off his feet by the tempest. "Why, what's the matter now?"

"It wasn't enough for them to go in and break the doors and windows, and smash the bottles and empty the kegs! Oh, no! But now they've set fire to the building and burned the whole thing to the ground! I'll tell you, I've been with them until now, but I'm done from this time forth. You remember what I say, will you? Do you suppose I propose to associate longer with men who commit crimes—yes, CRIMES—in the name of reform? Not much I don't. Rip 'em up the back, Mr. Editor, rip 'em up the back! They deserve it and that right royally, too! I'm not the only man in Quarrytown that's come to an end with them. There's Dr. Leonard and a whole host of others who say the same thing!"

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These statements were made with so much vehemence, and with such an outward indication of good faith, that the hypocrite deceived the young editor. The latter had, indeed, looked upon the last act of vandalism as the worst of all. He did think it was an outrage, and just as much of a crime as if the thing burned was a church, a schoolhouse or a home. Now it appeared that public sentiment was at last awakening against such nefarious deeds. There were Grote and Dr. Leonard, and many others. His desire to curry favor with the old physician was very great. He had succeeded pretty well without him, that is true, but he would rather bask in the sunshine of the old gentleman's approval than be buffeted by the storms of ill-will. Poor fellow, he stumbled plump into the trap set for him. Outside of a slight impulse to please the old doctor, there never was a man who did a deed from a more praiseworthy motive than that which prompted young Howe when he wrote the lines which appeared in his paper that week. He was sincere, honest and fearless. His conscience fully endorsed every word.

Which were the better, he queried in that week's **Augur**, to be a saloonkeeper or an incendiary? Most folks would prefer to be a saloonkeeper. He further said, pursuing the same line of thought, that everybody was heartily sick and tired of such business. Think of men having the sublime impudence to pose as reformers and moral citizens who would be guilty of such crimes! Yes; he would say crimes, absolute crimes! It has been said, therefore, that there are men who would "seize the livery of heaven to serve the Devil in," and if the present instance were not an illustration, then he was no judge! It was getting too ridiculous to be longer tolerated in a civilized

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community. This was not all he said, by any means, but what has been given shows the tenor of the whole editorial page that week.

O'Leary was happy over the editorial, and showed his delight in many ways. He visited the **Augur** office and purchased all of the extra copies, and would have made the editor a present in cold cash, but it was refused. He was about to have trouble with his insurance companies. They were a little skeptical in regard to his statement that the "fanatics" had set fire to his building, and were about to order an investigation by detectives, a thing O'Leary dreaded, but which the Quarrytown folks very much desired, but the editorial, coming from the home paper, settled the whole question. It ought to be authority, and so the companies paid the insurance money without further ado. They could, probably, save nothing by holding back, if it were true that the deed were done by the anti-saloon people, and they couldn't afford to get into a squabble with the people of one whole community, many of whom were their policy holders. So they pocketed their loss, but refused to put any more insurance on the saloon building.

It is pretty hard to describe just how much that editorial did arouse the people. They were positively white hot. It were hard to tell towards whom they had the greatest animosity, the editor or the whisky seller. The newspaper man could feel their deep resentment in the air, like a rheumatic feels the change of weather on a hot day. Not that they said so very much, but he was made to feel their opposition in the keenest and most substantial way. There were "none so poor as to do him reverence."

The **Augur** was published on Friday, and by Saturday night, fifty of his subscribers had dropped in

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and ordered their paper stopped. The entire subscription list did not exceed seven hundred and fifty *bona fide* subscribers. In ten days at least fifty per cent had stopped their papers.

On the following Sunday, the Baptist minister, the Rev. Mr. Miesse, taking the **Augur's** view of things, delivered a very powerful sermon, in which he followed the editor's course, and scored the community in rather severe terms. He and the newspaper man were now in the same boat, and the saloonkeeper was the helmsman. They were all victims of the boycott and no mistake! Before two weeks the reverend gentleman was informed that his services were no longer needed. His rejection was even more spontaneously and more forcibly expressed than the action of the official board of his church had made it. For he had neither choir to sing for him, nor congregation to listen to him at his next service. The only thing left for that good but imprudent soul to do was to pack his grip and leave town; for a preacher without a congregation is certainly as bad off as the briefless barrister. His departure, therefore, occurred forthwith.

The retirement from the village of the Rev. Mr. Miesse did not lessen the ire of the people against the editor in the slightest. His subscription not only decreased, but the advertising and the job printing fell off in the same proportion. The young man was beginning to feel decidedly the effect of the boycott in the region of his pocketbook. Its demoralizing influences in other directions were no less poignant. There is hardly anything of which one can conceive that produces a more uncanny feeling than to be the victim of a well-planned, healthy boycott. If one had his choice, either to be the objective point of one,

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or to be in the swirl of a cyclone, it were hard to tell which affliction it were best to select. No wonder Cain complained, and uttered his fear that every man's hand would be against him. Cain feared a boycott—that was what was the matter with him.

Go where the newspaper man would, no one cared to converse with him, or even to be seen talking with him. He had no friends or associates, unless he should go to O'Leary and his element, and that he would not do. At church it was the same way. A stranger spending the Sabbath in the village was given the glad hand and a smile of welcome. Not so the editor. At his approach all mirth vanished, all laughter ceased, and a stern and ominous silence took the place of all such joyous manifestations. He was greeted with cold and studied politeness, if not absolutely ignored. Was he a pestilence or a famine walking the earth in human form, that he should be thus regarded?

The young editor was plucky, and resolved to stand by his guns like a true soldier. He showed no fear, he wept no tears of repentance, he determined to make no concessions to the element that was now thoroughly in arms against him. To his surprise, he found no encouragement from either Frank Grote or Dr. Leonard. These two worthies, in fact, seemed to avoid him with more contempt than anybody else. He cleared the deck for action.

The next week he addressed his readers in one of the best editorials he had ever written. He began with a quotation from the Psalms: "Uphold me with thy free spirit." He appealed to the free spirit of the community. He urged that his position was right; it was manly. If they, the people, went astray, it was the editor's duty to call their attention to and

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strive to bring them back once more into the paths of rectitude and virtue. Even if he were wrong, he had only indulged himself in a freedom allowed by the constitution, and the sacred traditions of his country! In the exercise of that right he had been neither ill-tempered, nor abusive. He called attention to the fact that he had been with them in all lawful and proper methods. But when they started into the commission of crime, when they began to commit actual deeds of violence, he, for one, had stepped aside. Once he had gently suggested that such a course was wrong. Now, since a greater crime had been committed, and since he had openly dared to denounce it, the tyrannical, the intolerant old spirit of boycott had singled him out for its prey! How strange it was, he declared, that such a spirit could, in the hallowed names of religion and reform, boycott with equal readiness a minister of the gospel, a publisher of a newspaper, or the keeper of a groggery! He appealed from the blighting, narrow spirit of the boycott to the free spirit of that community; to those who were in favor of free-speech, liberty for the press, and general fair play!

His editorial was somewhat sophomorical, but it had the ring of the true metal in it, and produced a powerful effect. The people outside of the town's little coterie began to take sides in the young editor's favor. They admired his pluck, they endorsed his position. It was evident that the Quarrytown people had caught a Tartar. The country folks came to his rescue in the most decided manner, and partially made up his loss of subscription. Indeed, they went so far as to notify some of the Quarrytown merchants who were most prominent in the boycott against the newspaper, that if they did not abandon their position at once the country people would throw

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their trade elsewhere. It was becoming a two edged sword, and was cutting in both directions. **The Augur's** contemporaries, likewise, took up the cudgel, and the community was thoroughly belabored.

The Quarrytown folks didn't appreciate this kind of notoriety half so much as they did that gained by war on the saloon. In fact, they were heartily ashamed of it, and secretly wished they had left the plucky editor alone. But they stubbornly held their ground. O'Leary was enjoying this internecine strife better than anyone else. The war on him appeared to be but a side show, and he had a free ticket to the main tent.

CHAPTER XXI.

THERE is always somebody who knows more about your business than he does about his own. In fact, such an individual usually has none of his own, and he abounds in villages and small towns, where he is commonly called a loafer. Did you ever notice that each trade or calling has its particular variety of loafer or hanger on, just as each vegetable has its own particular genus of bug or parasite that feeds upon it? The livery business is no exception to this rule. With due respect to this business, and wishing to make no distinction, it may be said that the livery stable loafer is probably the most unkempt, ill-smelling individual of the whole fraternity. He carries about him perpetually the mal-odor of the uncurried equine, and his chief delight, on warm, sunshiny days, is to sit in front of the stable, stare at every woman that passes, chew tobacco, spit through his front teeth, and talk "hoss."

So, sitting in front of one of the livery establishments of Quarrytown, on a bright day in May, there was at least one such idle busybody. At the same time, Ezra H. Howe sallied forth resplendent in fine clothes, a brand-new buggy, and a well groomed horse, and drove out of the village in the direction of the setting sun. He did not stop to explain either his destination or the purpose of his journey. Some gossip had been indulged in in Quarrytown respecting the editor and Miss Leonard, and the doctor's opposition to their ardent friendship. What subject ever did escape a village gossip, especially if it involved

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to any extent a virtuous and lovely young woman? Mr. Howe was hardly out of hearing before the loafers began to discuss him and Miss Aimce.

"Whar d'ye reckon he's a-goin'?" (spit) asked one.

"Don't know," said another, rather a non-committal fellow.

"Hear-ed him ast Barnes fur a rig. Said he wasn't a-goin' fur. Won'er ef he ain't a-goin' out to ole Dave Workses? (spit) Bet he is b/ golly! What say, Uncle Bill?"

Uncle Bill was silent and stroked his grizzled whiskers.

"D'ye know whether Amy Leonard's out to Dave's ur not?"

"No, I don't know whur she is. I ain't lookin' after Amy now. Hambletonian No. 2 's about all I kin manage at this time."

"I hear-ed that ole Doc raised the Dickens with that feller fur goin' 'round his gal. (spit) Ordered him to stay away from his house altewgether," returned the first speaker.

"Oh, Tim, ye're allers buttin' in. Mebbe't's so, mebbe 't isn't," Uncle Bill suggested. "A feller can't believe **all** he hears," and he caught a handful of flies, and rubbed them to certain destruction along his trouser leg.

"Less ast ole Doc whur his darter is," insisted Tim. "He'll be 'long here purty soon. Don't ye remember he's out to Joe Burnses a-tendin' his boy fur appendiciters?" (spit).

"Oh, keep yer mug out o' the fraction, now won't ye? Why don't ye let the young feller have his fun? 'Cause they ain't no gal in this town'll look at **you**, 's no sign why ye ort to be jealous o' ever'body!" Uncle Bill ha ha'd loudly at the thrust.

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"I ain't jealous. I'm durned shore 'twouldn't do me no good to be. Amy Leonard's too high up in the pictures fur me to look at, even."

Just at this moment, the doctor's phaeton appeared, coming in from an opposite direction to that taken by young Howe. The native yellow dog qualities of the loafer arose triumphant over the sound advice given him by his companion, and as the doctor was passing by, he jumped up and shouted:

"Doc, Doc Leonard. Wait a minute, I want to speak to ye."

Uncle Bill muttered something that sounded like "D—n fool!" as Tim left his seat and ran out to the physician's vehicle.

"Doc, kin I ast ye whur yer darter is this evenin'?" he queried as soon as he arrived near the side of the phaeton.

The proud old man surveyed the mangy loafer with contempt, and tilted up his nose as he caught a whiff of the atmosphere in which the creature lived and moved and had his being.

"I don't know that my daughter's whereabouts is any of your bus—"

He was about to finish his caustic sentence, but feeling sure that he was about to be insulted, and that he had a piece of information that would be of value to the doctor, or at least stir up some trouble, the cheap busybody cut the end off the other's remark by asking:

"Ain't she out to Dave Workses?"

"Well, yes," answered the doctor, his curiosity getting the better of his crustiness. "What of it?"

"Wal, I'll jest bet ten dollars that that 'ere editor feller's out thar, too! He jest a little while ago,

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got the mos' stylish rig in this 'ere barn and druv in that d'rection!"

All of the old man's suspicions were aroused in an instant.

"H—ll fire!" the furious old doctor exclaimed, and snatching the whip out of its socket, he started his horse at a furious pace toward the home of his brother-in-law.

The miserable loafer, so small, so mean, whom the old doctor would not ordinarily treat with common civility, resumed his seat beside his companion as gratified as if he had done a truly noble deed.

"Somebody ort to kick you clean around this block!" growled Uncle Bill. "Ole Doc Leonard wouldn't pull you out of a mud hole, an' you know it!"

Mr. Howe **had** gone out to David Works' fine country home, and he **had** known well enough that Aimee would be there. He had received intelligence to that effect from Miss Katie, whose movements were not watched by Dr. Leonard or anybody else. Miss Aimee had observed the peculiar dilemma into which the young editor had precipitated himself in the village, and had noted on every hand that her lover was the subject of fierce censure and attack. Her father, indeed, fairly gloated over the young man's unpopularity, and made sure that all of the unjust and evil things said about him should reach her ears. Instead of being influenced thereby as the doctor calculated, she admired Howe all the more for his moral courage, and read his high-sounding editorials with genuine delight. She had come to the conclusion that she might at the present juncture be of some assistance and encouragement to him. She did not for one moment share a particle of the scorn and general contempt in which he was apparently held,

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and more than half believed that much of this odium was traceable to the influence and ill-will of her father.

When the young man reached the Works homestead, the sun had dropped down behind the western line of trees, and such a pretty evening there was! Mr. Howe proposed to continue the drive with Miss Aimee as his companion, and she readily agreed to such an inviting proposal. Away they flew in blissful ignorance of the approach of another vehicle, whose solitary occupant, urging forward his beast with much speed, was evidently in a far different state of mind from that enjoyed by the happy young couple.

It is difficult to say what might have happened had these two conveyances met. However, Ezra turned down a lane that led away from the main thoroughfare, just in the nick of time. He had a penchant for quiet lanes where the green grass carpeted the ground, and where the trees spread their canopy o'erhead, and that penchant served him a good turn this evening. Shortly afterward the old doctor raged by on his way to the farmhouse. The couple turned in their seats and saw in the gloaming a vehicle go by with the horse on a run, but they supposed it was some semi-intoxicated countryman returning from a day's potations with Mr. O'Leary. So they resumed their pleasant journey and took up their delightful conversation just where it had for the moment been laid aside.

Dr. Leonard was getting his eyes open to the fact that he was being outwitted once more. Fool that he was! (This was the way he put it in his mind!) He ought to have known that David Works and his family would be sure to befriend Aimee in anything she might see fit to do. His schemes—the successful boycott and the practical annihilation

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of the young man's business—were as naught. His daughter had remained silent and respectful when he spoke disparagingly of young Howe, and when others had done so in his presence. He had invited Rev. Mr. Dorchester home with him one evening for supper and that gentleman and the doctor had put in an entire evening in ridiculing and belittling the young newspaper man. Aimee must of necessity have heard every word. The doctor had been hopeful that they had made some impression, and the present instance showed how little ground his hopes had been built upon. It was enough to make any man mad, not to speak of one who had been in that condition for some months past! If ever there was a mental Tophet inside a human being's cranium, Dr. Leonard certainly had that undesirable thing. When he reached the front veranda of the Works home and demanded to know the whereabouts of his daughter, Katie said afterwards that one could almost see smoke coming out of his ears and eyes! But then Miss Works was a little too lurid in her description.

She had recognized her visitor before he could get his horse hitched, and thus had a full minute in which to steady her nerves for the ordeal of meeting her unexpected uncle. She ran out to greet him most affably, caught his ungracious hand and attempted to land him in a comfortable chair in the mansion's best room, but the old man jerked back and balked so suddenly that that maneuver was checkmated.

Katie was really guilty, there was no question about that, and of course, Uncle Leonard must know it. She had conspired to aid the lovers more than once, and she wasn't a bit sorry for that, but being caught at it was decidedly embarrassing. She won-

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dered if he was going to use his cane on her. He acted as if he had something of that kind in mind! Would she better call for her father, great, sturdy yoeman, six feet tall, to come to her aid? Oh, no! After the first blush was over, she had lost all fear, and was as cool and suave as any one could wish to find her.

"Where's Aimee? Where's my daughter?" the old physician repeated fiercely.

"Really, Uncle Doctor, won't you come in and be seated? Why, Aimee's all right. What makes you so excited, Uncle?"

"Where is she? I demand to know!" he insisted.

"Oh, I can't tell you just where she is at this precise moment."

"Isn't she here? Isn't she in this house?" came the questions thick and fast.

"No, not right now. She's gone out riding with a friend."

"Who? What friend?"

"Let me see!" said Katie apparently trying to recall a name which the precious little rogue knew as well as she did her own. "Is it Al-Alison? Oh, Uncle Doctor, that young man who was here at our party that night! Don't you remember him?"

"That young Alison who came with Aimee that night?" eagerly asked the doctor. Possibly the situation was not so bad as he imagined.

"No, no; not that one," Katie was forced to acknowledge, "the other young man. Oh, yes; I remember him now, Mr. Howe, that's his name!"

The doctor started as if he would run off the veranda in hot pursuit.

"Which way did they go?" he demanded.

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"Oh, I couldn't tell you which way, nor where they went. But they'll be back in the course of an hour or two. The only thing you can do is to sit down and wait patiently until they come!"

The physician sat down finally, and turned his attention to Miss Katie, at whom he glared with a grim and settled face.

"Missy, I'll remember you!" he said at last, white with anger and chagrin. "You act very innocently and all that, but I want you to know that I know that you are at the bottom of this! And I shall tell your parents about the way in which you have treated me and my wishes in this matter!"

"Shall I call them?" demurely asked the roguish Katie.

The doctor couldn't well refuse to appeal to the young lady's parents since he had threatened to do so, and he said:

"Yes; you may! I shall at least learn if they, too, are assisting in my daughter's disobedience!"

Mr. and Mrs. Works were summoned forthwith, and listened with an outward semblance of respect to Dr. Leonard's tale of woe.

"Dr. Leonard, how old is Aimee now?" Mr. Works asked.

"She is twenty," was the answer.

"Has she ever manifested any preference for this Mr. Alison whom you believe she ought to marry?"

"Well,—er,—well, I might as well admit that she has not!"

"She is very much attached to the editor, and he to her. I can see that much myself. I like that young man. One reason is because there's a gang down there in Quarrytown who think that they are the very salt of the earth that have tried to destroy him,

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and bless your soul he has the grit to fight the whole set of them! I am taking five papers, and I only need one, just to encourage him."

"Umph!" growled the doctor; "I suppose you are a partisan of the saloon!"

"No, I'm not any more than that young man has been! I hate to see a whole community jump on one man. Doctor, I think that Aimee shows good taste, and the brave girl shall never want a friend as long as I live!"

"Hurrah for papa!" shouted Katie, clapping her hands.

"Very well, David Works," snapped Dr. Leonard, "our families from this time forth will be as strangers to each other!"

"Yes; doctor," replied the farmer, with the greatest coolness, "and I have always patronized you as our family physician, and paid you the same as if we were not related. Now if I owe you one cent, I am ready to pay you off, and I shall employ some other doctor henceforth."

That same night as Mr. Howe and Aimee were driving up the graveled way to Mr. Works' home on their return from their delightful drive, they were stopped by Johnny Works, the fourteen-year-old brother of Katie, who stood up on the buggy wheel and whispered excitedly to Aimee:

"Oh, Aimee, your pa's there at the house and he's as mad as the Dickens!"

The poor girl's heart sank at this dread intelligence. She was again to be subjected to humiliation and chagrin all because she dared to be with the man whom she loved. She compressed her lips firmly and made a heroic resolve. Then placing her pretty hand upon her lover's arm she said:

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"He shall never drive me from your presence again in order that he may stab you with his cruel tongue! The insults that he heaps upon you I will stay and share!"

"Don't be afraid, darling," he returned; "I know you will ever be true to me and I to you, and what harm can your father do us? Let us face him boldly and tell him we are engaged!"

With this they alighted from the buggy, Ezra hitched his horse, and together they went in to meet the irate doctor, who had been getting hotter and hotter as the time dragged on. He was not like Tam O'Shanter's wife, who had to "nurse her wrath to keep it warm," but his kept sufficiently hot by spontaneous combustion, as it were.

"Mr. Howe," the doctor exclaimed as soon as his eyes rested upon the couple, "I thought I told you to keep away from my daughter!" His posture was positively threatening. Would he so far forget himself as to strike the young man? Ezra was about to reply, but Aimee stepped in between the choleric old gentleman and her lover.

"Father," she said in firm but respectful tones, "I have always tried to be a good and dutiful daughter to you. Heretofore, I have always obeyed you without question. But a time has come when I must speak for myself, because my whole life's happiness depends upon it. Mr. Howe," she continued, stepping back to her lover's side and taking his hand in hers, "is with me tonight at my invitation, and we have this night plighted our love, and that promise I shall ever hold inviolate!"

And when the sweet girl took his hand and made such an eloquent little speech, Ezra went too far! He put his arm around the fair one's waist.

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The high-tempered old doctor became almost frantic. Raising his cane high above his head he sprang at the young man like a tiger. There is no question but that he would have given the young editor a blow upon the head that would have caused him to see stars, had not Mr. Works interfered. He quickly stepped between the bellicose old physician and his intended quarry and seized the uplifted cane ere it could descend upon the devoted head of Mr. Howe.

"Dr. Leonard, you would not do a deed like that in my house, would you? For shame, sir!" There was authority in those tones. The doctor's attention was attracted toward Mr. Works, and the editor's head was saved the attack. Aimee quietly and gently disengaged her lover's arm and led him to a seat, which he took at her request. Then she approached her father and said:

"Father, if you are ready to go home, I think I shall go with you!" and thus they took their departure.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE difference in time between this chapter and the last one is not so very great, but great enough, at least, to permit Ezra H. Howe to drive home, put up his rig, retire to his room, and go to bed. He essayed to sleep, but found that he could not do so. Every time he was about to yield to the gentle goddess, Slumber, there came to view a portly form, arm upraised, with an uplifted cane. Of course, each time the form approached, the goddess fled.

Near the time when the "wee sma' hours" begin he arose from his couch and consulted his watch. He was about to go back to bed, when he heard a horse and buggy going rapidly by on the street below. He seated himself in his open window and looked out. The moon was just coming up over the roofs of the houses toward the east, full and glorious. Ezra heard the horse cross the bridge near the south corporation line, still running. It was a matter of surprise that the occupant or occupants of the buggy were in such great haste at that time of night. They were not after a doctor for they were driving into the country. Ezra sat in the window and enjoyed the gentle May breezes that fanned his somewhat heated temples. Suddenly there came a quick flash from up the street north, which showed ruddy on the buildings, followed by a heavy explosion. Mr. Howe dodged out of the window, and dropped upon the floor with some force. He thought of old Mr. Boycott, who evidently had it "in" for himself—and some others—and wondered if they weren't really taking

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a shot at him. At least he would try to see where they had planted their howitzer, and he cautiously poked his head out of the window and peered out. He heard the sound of smashing glass and falling timber, but couldn't see a solitary human figure. The noise aroused some of the near-by people, and he could hear windows softly raised and doors carefully opened. For a space of time equal to two minutes everything was quiet, as if the people having raised their windows and opened their doors, were listening. Then there came another report that was awful. It seemed to the startled editor as if the very earth were being rent asunder. He had never been near such a noise before. The shock broke window panes in adjoining buildings, and Mr. Howe could distinctly feel the force of the concussion from where he sat, at least a square away. The flash was not so lurid, but a slight glow that came and went like a quick winged shadow. Ezra flew from the window, and for a moment had a little boy's impulse to crawl under the bed. The noise was so stupendous that it seemed to break itself into fragments at intervals as it rolled over the hills and down the valleys. It was so much more terrific than anything with which the editor had ever been acquainted that he was almost panic-stricken. Shortly, however, his courage came back, and he was at the window once more. Again, he could hear the breaking of glass and the falling of timber, but with ten-fold more distinctness. It was a tempest of material, broken into pieces, pattering upon the earth. Every dog in Quarrytown waked up and howled as if a wagon had run over his tail. Horses neighed, donkeys brayed, roosters crowed, men shouted, women screamed. Soon a multitude of footsteps were heard coming on the brick-paved side-

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walks, as if everybody had gotten dressed in about the same time. And a woman's voice, probably that of the first arrival said in shrill tones:

"Oh, goody! goody! It's the dirty old saloon! They've dynamited it!"

Mr. Howe knew the feeling of the people toward himself, and an attack at midnight, using as an agent the most destructive of all known forces, was enough to appall the stoutest heart. Furthermore, the present was an attack by an unseen foe, it was like a stab in the back. It was a volley from an ambush, and even veterans will become panic-stricken under such attacks! It was with some trepidation, therefore, that the young man dressed himself and went down to the street below. Thence he followed a crowd to the place where the saloon building had once stood. It was as complete a wreck as it is possible for any power to make. Every bottle, jug, keg and barrel had been torn into fragments and blown away, leaving only the odor of their contents. That was still in evidence! The whole front of the building was torn out and had gone skyward, And the side walls were splintered into kindling wood!

"O'Leary himself slept in the back room last night!" some one said, in sepulchral tones, and thither the crowd turned expecting to find the dead body of the saloonist, or rather some fragment of it! There was the bed whereon he had lain, considerably torn and tumbled, as might have been expected, but there was not a leg, nor a foot, nor a hand, not even an ear to be found! Many of the curious members of that midnight assemblage were disappointed. Not that they really wished Mr. O'Leary's death, but if they could have found a kidney, or an eyeball or a

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part of a jaw bone they could have thought about it and talked about it forever!

The temperance people, for no one doubted that they had done it, had planned their work too well to hurt anybody. Well did they know that O'Leary had slept in the back room. It was evident that the charges had been set off in front of the building. The first one was a small stick or less of dynamite. This had probably been laid on the window sill. It was designed to be an awakener. The second charge, containing, doubtless, several sticks, had been placed under the foundation of the structure itself. Near where the last charge had been exploded, there was found the next day some ten or twelve feet of burnt-out fuse. The latter explosion had thus been planned to occur somewhat later than the first, and it was the one that had been the destroyer.

It was learned afterwards that O'Leary and a young farm hand named Cheevers were sleeping in the rear room of the saloon that night. The first charge, though it did tumble them out of bed, did them no physical injury; save a few bumps and bruises. They seized their clothing and rushed out at the side door. O'Leary, so Cheevers afterwards said, was exceedingly brave and defiant at first. With pants in one hand and revolver in the other, he called loudly, "f'r a soight of the domned, dir-rty dogs!" that had disturbed his peaceful repose so rudely. It was lucky for him that he did not take a notion to walk around in front. If he had, he would have, doubtless, have been forced to keep company with the front of his building in its aerial journey.

But few of his blasphemous sentences had been uttered when the second charge went off underneath the foundation in front. The force of the explosion



"HE NEVER CAME BACK ANY MORE"

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knocked Cheevers, who had slipped several paces away, completely off his feet, while it literally picked O'Leary off his feet and landed him on the inside of a high picket fence surrounding the back yard across the alley. He was still unhurt, but probably the most demoralized man that ever lived. Cheevers said he jumped up, cleared the fence over which he had been thrown and "lit out" as if he were being pursued by all the demons of the nether world. He must have made a sorry figure as he dashed along and it was fortunate for the erstwhile proud O'Leary that the night concealed the flying figure; for he ran away very scantily attired.

"He never came back any more!" to quote the refrain from an old song. That morning he was seen to board the eight o'clock train for the city in a suit of clothes borrowed from a friend. He wouldn't come back to Quarrytown, the scene of his many triumphs, but of his final discomfiture, even to get his clothes, but had them, together with a few personal effects, sent to him by express. He sold the ground to a business man of the town, who moved the shattered hulk away, and built a fine new brick block thereon. But it was never again used for saloon purposes, nor has any other building been so used for that matter. Nor has the town suffered greatly because of that fact. It has dropped out of notoriety, but has prospered in a way all its own, the good old way! Not a murder, nor even a murderous assault has been committed in the village, and, in truth, there is scarcely even a fight. There are no wife-beaters there. No father squanders for whisky the money that should be used for the support and education of his children. The churches are well attended and well supported. The town has a reputation abroad

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that no whisky-soaked village can acquire, and it is said that street car companies and manufacturers, everything else being equal, will employ men from Quarrytown sooner than from anywhere else, because of their sobriety and industry.

O'Leary is now living comfortably in the city, and running a dive that pays him fairly well. He carries on his business, disreputable as it is, in perfect freedom from molestation. The public conscience where he now dispenses drinkables is not stretched to such a high tension as it was in Quarrytown. Miserable little half-clad children may now carry bucketsful of booze from his door to bleary-eyed, maudlin mothers, brutal men and depraved women may curse and swear and drink through the livelong Sunday within the law-protected haven of his premises. Now and then some mother's son is brutally beaten, or cut to pieces, or even killed, and the blood that stains his walls and saturates his floor calls upon the dull, cold ear of human justice in vain! Such little things as these are bound to happen, and why stir up a muss about them? School houses abound, massive and beautiful three-story structures. Churches whose spires climb higher into God's eternal sunshine than any other buildings are plentiful. Yet, nestling within the shadow of these noble institutions, unawed, unterrified, unconvicted by the thunderings of their deep-toned bells, Mr. O'Leary pursues his vile traffic in peace! "Divil the bit" do they "bother Pathrick" and "Divil the bit" does "Pathrick bother" them! "Behold! how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

AT THE time of this story Dr. Leonard was a man closely approaching to the age of three-score. His father before him had been a wealthy and honored resident of Quarrytown. Upon the latter's death, John B., the son, had fallen heir to much valuable property and not a little ready cash. He was a man possessing an unusually bright mind, and had determined in his youth to study medicine. Accordingly, he applied himself to an acquisition of a knowledge of that science with the persistency and enthusiasm that were his chief characteristics. The result was that in a few years he was graduated from one of the best medical colleges in the land, at the head of his class. Having much property in his native town, and the community being a good one in which a physician might practice his profession, he decided to locate upon his native heath, and so he hung out his shingle and started out upon his career in Quarrytown. He was a success from the very first day. It was but a few years until he was considered one of the very best physicians in Blackwood county. His skill in diagnosis was unerring, and his ability to sort out and apply the proper remedy to fit the disease was very great. More than that, his presence in the sick room was all that courtesy could require. His countenance, to be sure, was prone to assume a serious and solemn cast that did high honor to the invalid's complaint. However, it made no difference how many clouds the physician wore upon his brow at his first incoming, he was very careful to induct the patient into the belief that all

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those clouds would wear a silver lining under skillful treatment.

Part of his success was due to his skill and knowledge, but not all. A portion of it was to be credited to his wealth and standing; for even many poor folks prefer to patronize a rich man than help support a poor one, though equally deserving. Oh, what a deep and soul-searching knowledge of the human heart did the Saviour possess, and how true it is, had he been speaking only of the hollowness of society, when he said: "To him that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not shall be taken even that he hath." How people do heap up for those who are rich and great the stores of wealth and honor! But for the poor, the honest-handed, humble-hearted poor, they often have not even one kind word. There ought to be an end of time and a day of judgment by and by, if for no other reason save to reverse this condition!

Another part of Dr. Leonard's success was due to his splendid judgment of the creature, man. He read human nature quickly and with such accuracy that he was seldom deceived. He soon became very popular and his business extended far and wide. So great, indeed, was his practice that he had to winnow out and discard a portion of it. He, therefore, adopted this singular and cold-blooded rule: In no instance would he visit a patient that had failed to pay him a bill previously contracted and due. It made no difference what calamity had visited the wretched person's home, whether disease or accident had stricken an innocent babe or an unoffending wife, it was all the same to him. The doctor simply would not go. The result was that many of the poorer folks were compelled to patronize the other physicians, while

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Dr. Leonard retained the pick and choice of the flock.

Years passed on during which the doctor had persistently followed the above policy of practice until the rule itself began to have a reflexive influence upon his own mind, and he imperceptibly acquired a genuine contempt not only for poor folks, but even for persons in moderate circumstances. He catered to the rich, the well-to-do, the influential. He flattered and attended them. Consequently, his influence with the wealthy and controlling elements of society was very great. But the man who didn't have a dollar, bah! what did he amount to? The change that is gradually wrought in every such man's heart was wrought in his. Ordinarily, with the setting of each day's sun each one of us is a better or a worse man or woman. And the practice of a policy so devoid of human sympathy, so opposed to the love idea of the Saviour, made a worse man of Dr. Leonard as he grew older. The circle of desirable acquaintances for him grew narrower; the number of persons to whom he spoke kindly and courteously became smaller.

When the proud old man left the home of David Works in company with his daughter, on the evening of his quarrel with the editor, his heart was burning with rage and a sense of injured dignity. He could stand, with a fair degree of patience, anything that Mr. Works or any member of that family might say. For that gentleman was a wealthy and substantial farmer, and, of course, **his** bills were always promptly paid, and his patronage had always been thrown to his brother-in-law, the doctor. But that poor editor, whose only earthly holding was a little printing office,—he had no use whatever for him at any time, much less, taken in connection with the fact that such a creature should aspire to the hand of

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John B. Leonard's daughter! But that wasn't by any means the worst of it. The idea that the daughter should receive the attentions of this nobody was simply awful! Further, if there were still a more extended depth into which the old man could tumble, it was the fact that his sweet, demure and obedient Aimee should do the unheard of thing of telling him to his very face that she was going to marry that fellow—that was gall and wormwood, indeed! It's a wonder the testy old fellow didn't have a fit and froth at the mouth! Well, he made a resolution, stiff and strong, and sealed it with a great, big oath, going much further than even the nominal Presbyterian that he was ought to go, to be sure, and said he'd be d—d if he didn't ruin that young editor or die in the attempt. He was not a man who was prone to make idle or frivolous resolutions, and he certainly expected to carry this one into execution. He, therefore, set about to put into effect this drastic determination, and what he did in this regard must now be described.

Dr. Leonard was a politician of the most up-to-date type. He was a member of the opposition party, and greatly dreaded by the workers and managers on the other side. **They** said that, under the guise of dignity and respectability, he could use, or cause to be used, more money and whisky on election day than any other man in White Clover township. In fact, about the only notice or attention he ever paid a certain class of poor white (and colored) "trash" was to get their votes. It is a matter of some regret that, though the whisky business had been driven from the town of Quarrytown, the saloon destroyed, and the drug stores placed under ban, yet at last accounts it had not been driven from the polls on election day. The jug and the demi-john circulated freely then; the

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jug among the victors, the demijohn among the opposition. Of course, the demijohn was the more dangerous; for it hid its power to wound under an innocent, wicker-ware frame. And it fixed up a certain class of voters all right, too! There were not many of that class in Quarrytown, but the few that were must be looked after, principle or no principle. How easy it would be for the managers of political parties, adopting the wise suggestion of Theodore Roosevelt, to enter into a mutual arrangement to use no corrupting means in elections. The general result probably would be in nowise affected, but how it would promote the dignity, the cleanness and the morality of American political life!

So it will be seen that the person who resolved that he would ruin the young editor was a man of proud and unyielding disposition, and one not so overstocked with principle as he might have been. Moreover, it has been shown that he had a wonderful influence in the community, such, indeed, as few men possessed. In addition to these, he understood the art of political wire-pulling and chicanery with the best of them. The last accomplishment was especially desirable for one who had such an undertaking as the doctor's in hand.

The dynamiting of the saloon, it will be remembered, occurred in the early morning following the night upon which the doctor adopted his resolution. He hoped that now the editor would further enrage the community against himself by more and severer criticisms than ever, but in this he was disappointed. The young newspaper man prudently refrained from any unfavorable comment whatever upon that happening. The saloon was gone, and for good; the community was infinitely better off. There was no

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use to dig up that harrowing subject further. He had partially won back the ground he had lost in the boycott, and the moral victory of that occurrence was his already. So he passed the dynamiting of the saloon by, simply giving a news item with an no editorial comment whatever. Dr. Leonard was very much aggravated because the young man had seen fit to act with so much prudence and saw that so far as the community was concerned, there would be no more direct opposition from it. He must act independently of the people—that much was certain. One day he called his faithful friend and co-conspirator, Frank Grote, into his office.

“I want to run that young man, Howe, out of this community,” Dr. Leonard said, sententiously breaking into the subject uppermost in his mind at once.

“How are you going to do it?” queried Grote.

“Can’t we get these temperance bigots wrought up to such a pitch that they will mob him and tear up his office?” suggested the doctor, laying aside the masque of hypocrisy, and applying a semi-opprobrious epithet to the very people with whom he professed the most active sympathy.

“No; that can’t be done,” returned Grote. “I tried my level best to get them to go further than they did before. They did more in the boycott than they will ever do again. He rather got the better of them in that deal, and they are ashamed that they ever tried to boycott him. Much less would they be disposed to attempt severer measures were there renewed provocation. But the young fellow this time has shown a little horse sense, and has refrained from saying one word calculated to offend anybody.”

“But then if he should be mobbed, and his

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wretched little office torn in pieces, everybody would believe that it was the temperance people who did it, don't you think?" again suggested the tempter, feeling the ground with his lever and trying to find a place to fit it so that he might be able to pry up the opposition of his own minion.

"Oh, yes; of course they would," readily assented Grote.

"And if some one should use him roughly. **roughly**, I say, and it was not known certainly who did it, there's not a man in Blackwood county who would hesitate to lay the deed at the door of the fanatics, is there?"

"No; I don't suppose there is. In fact, since the saloon has gone, it has been suggested by some of the outsiders that the Augur office would probably be the next. But I've never heard such a thought expressed by any of the temperance people as yet."

"Well," continued the vindictive old man, "I want him mobbed. I want him given a coat of tar and feathers and drummed out of the town. I want his infernal little print shop broken into pieces and tumbled out of the window. I want you to see that it is done! Do you hear?"

Grote stared at the savage expression that had come upon the speaker's face. He had helped him put into execution many a bad and unscrupulous design, both political and otherwise, but this one was, by far, the worst. He knew his friend well enough to know that his church pretensions were all a cloak, and that he would be unprincipled enough to do almost anything to get rid of an obnoxious individual. But the present suggestion was a degree or so beyond anything he and the doctor had ever attempted both in turpitude and danger.

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"Well, Doc," he said with serious face, his eyes fixed on the floor, "that's a job that I don't like to undertake. It would be easy enough to tear up his office. I—I wouldn't mind that—so very much—that is, arranging to have it done. But as for doing any personal harm to—to the poor devil, I—I, well, he never did me any harm!"

"Hell's fire!" responded the old man passionately, "I wouldn't think of doing one without the other. Don't you know that if his little office alone were destroyed he'd pose before this community as a kind of martyr? All the women and half the men would go crazy over him. I have no doubt they'd raise him ten thousand dollars to make good his loss. No, no, sir; I want him served so roughly that he'll find it to his advantage to get out of town and stay there!"

"Well, I don't know who you'd get to do that kind of a job. Don't you understand he's a fellow of some nerve and liable to kill two or three men in the general round-up? What would we do with two or three dead men on our hands? That would lead to the exposure of the whole business, and more than likely, get both of us into such trouble that all we've got wouldn't keep us from prison. I never did think that I would enjoy spending the remainder of my days in Jeffersonville!" Grote was, evidently, not taking hold of his friend's plans readily.

"Let me tell you something, Frank. I want to know when the adoption of any plan of mine has ever gotten you or any one else in trouble? Haven't you always succeeded when you followed my advice? Now, I know you could arrange to call that young fellow out of his room, and do it in such a well-masqued, kindly tone that he'd never suspect any unfair play, or even think of providing himself with a weapon.

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And, if he should, you could have a dozen or so trusty fellows around him and they could disarm him before he could use his weapon. There's a class of roustabouts round here that we've been using in our schemes and buying on election day. Can't you get them into the plan? They've cost the party a lot of money and many a gallon of whisky. I should think we ought to be able to use them once in a while. They are under obligations to you and you know enough of any one of them to send each one to the penitentiary. If you got them to help in a scheme like this; they wouldn't give you away, do you think?" The doctor's references were to facts; that much Grote was forced to admit mentally as the old man proceeded.

"There's James Seymour," he continued, "didn't he steal Ad Wilson's revolver, and sell it for whisky? If it hadn't been for you slipping in and redeeming it and returning it to Wilson, it's more than likely he would have been sent over the road. You did that with the money I furnished; for I suspected the day would come when I should need the services of a few men like him. There's Harry Hibson; you know that he's escaped from the Iowa state prison where he was serving a life sentence for killing a man. If he should help in this plan, he won't go telling about it, will he? Besides, as a matter of law, every man who assists in this attack upon the editor will be equally guilty with us, and they won't be in for telling on themselves—do you think they will?"

"But I meant, suppose some one of our party should get killed, would that not lead to the exposure of the others and to us, too?"

"I don't see why. They would have no reason to tell who was behind the enterprise, especially if we should furnish them the money with which to

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fight the case. The man who got killed, if any should be so unfortunate, you are not apprehensive that he would give us away are you?" The doctor smiled grimly enough.

"Suppose I should get Seymour and Hibson," continued Grote, his mind on the main chance, "that wouldn't be half enough for such an enterprise as you propose. I'll need not less than fifteen or twenty good, lusty scrappers."

"Money will procure all you need and the kind you need. I will spend one thousand dollars to whip that impudent puppy out of the town!"

"And what will you give **me** if I arrange it for you?" asked Grote, now thoroughly interested in the plan, the difficulties in the way of its success vanishing away under the potent influence of gold.

"I will give you five hundred dollars for yourself alone, and another five hundred with which to hire enough dead beats to help with the job!" The old doctor knew that he could trust Frank, and Frank knew that he could trust the doctor. This was not the first time they had constructed a subterranean passage to the accomplishment of their designs, the perpetration of which the world never did trace to its proper source.

"Whew!" whistled Grote, "you must be in dead earnest! I have done many things for you heretofore, and without charge, but in this instance I believe I **will** avail myself of your offer. Five hundred is not picked up every day."

"Well, sir; you can have it just as freely as water," replied the doctor, "and if you follow my advice, and work to my plans, even if you fail, you will get your money just the same."

"Let me see," said Grote beginning to figure

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already, "I think I can get Scymour and Hibson, that's two. Then that gang that loaf around Barnes' livery stable—they are a cheap set—I can get them. They're not much force, but they'll do to jolt him in the back or pull at his leg. Then there are probably half a dozen more in and around Quarrytown. Mostly of the yellow dog variety, though. Can't be depended on in a serious fight, but if they ever get the fellow down, what they'll do to him will be a plenty! Oh, yes; I've got the idea now! There's a clique of toughs over at Freeport that are just out of sight for that kind of business. There's the Hittle boys, four or five of them, and they are good, stout fighters, too! Yes; get them about half drunk and they are decidedly dangerous! It's said that Sam, George and Jim Hittle are the very fellows who killed that negro policeman in the city last fall, though the deed never could be fixed on them for lack of evidence. I can get those boys for twenty dollars the trip and plenty of old Tamarac. Then there are the Jacobs, three of them, cut a man's throat for ten dollars! Bill, John and 'Buster'—wonder if 'Buster's' out of jail yet? Guess he is. I'll give each of them ten dollars and drinks! Doc, blamed if I don't understand it if you are sure you want it done!"

"Well, I just do!" promptly replied the old physician, "and to clinch the bargain, I will just write you out a check for five hundred, as an earnest of what will follow, and to cover all possible losses from the very start. You commence today and make a careful canvass of your forces and don't hesitate to use a little money now. Get them in good shape!"

The check was accordingly written, and Mr. Grote turned to go.

"Say, Frank," the doctor called, as if remembering

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something omitted, "you will go by the home of those Dunravens as you go to dinner. I wish you would step in and tell the girl, Miss Susie, to come to my office without fail this afternoon. I've a part in the scheme I think I can get her to perform!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

NOT many days after the conversation given in the last chapter. Frank Grote approached James Seymour, whom he found, as usual, out of a job and dead broke. But that wasn't the worst of it, from James' standpoint. He was standing around on the street corners "spitting cotton," because he was as dry as a salt herring, not being able to procure a drink from any source since his old friend, O'Leary, had moved out.

"Hello, Jim!" shouted Frank, in the most familiar manner; "what are you doing now?"

Jim locked up with a placid grin and said:

"Most ever'budy I kin!"

"Oh, nonsense, I mean, what are you working at?"

"I'm doin' jist what ye've ketched me at this present moment—nothin'!" replied Mr. Seymour.

"Would you like to have a job, a good one?" asked Mr. Grote in an inspiring tone.

"Oh, that depends," smiled James, "it depends very largely. I kin git a job most any time breakin' stone on the street. In fact, it requires purty good judgement on my part to keep from havin' that job forced on me!"

"What I have to offer," pursued Grote, "is nothing like that. I can put you in touch with a little affair in which you can get twenty-five cases for a two hours' work, and all the good old Tamarac you can swig into the bargain!" Grote drew nearer, and became more confidential.

"I'm yer huckleberry," replied Jim, with a serio-comical look upon his features. Then he added, the

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grin broadening: "Meanin' o' course, ef it's honest!"

"If it's honest?" queried Grote, nettled in spite of himself at the unexpected question; "when did you strike that lay?"

"Oh, I was always that a-way, ever since a boy. I followed the ole nigger's motto: 'Be honest.' " Here he paused for a moment, then with a droll expression of mock seriousness, continued: "But if ye cain't be honest, be as honest as ye kin!"

"Oh-h, it's that way?" returned Grote, somewhat relieved; "well, I can't say my scheme is honest or dishonest, it's hardly along that line. But it's more or less dangerous."

"Oh, I don't keer fur that. I've been knocked around from pillar to post so much I rather like it. It's the spice o' life fur me, danger an' hard jolts is. I kin give an' take both. Dangerous in what way, Frank, prosecution or a cracked head?"

"It might be both!" drawing still nearer and speaking as impressively as possible.

"Wal, spit it out, Grote. Respectable people will begin to git nervous if they see us this close together very long."

"Confound that fellow!" thought the other, "he's always saying something that jars on one's sensitiveness!"

Seymour continued: "We've been together in many a little, ole projick; I reckon, Grotie, we kin pastur out together in this!"

"I've always treated you well, too, Seymour, when we've been together and every other time, haven't I?" said the doctor's minion, feeling that it was no waste of time to cultivate the soil a little before the actual sowing of the seed.

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"Sure, ye have!" heartily responded the other, "there ain't no kick a-comin' agin you!"

"Paid you splendidly for all you ever did?"

"That ye have, Frank, ole pard!"

"Got you out of trouble lots of times, stayed your fines for you, and you let me pay them the most of the times, didn't I, Jim, and yet, I never got mad at you, or quit helping you, did I?"

"You're Johnny-Right! Go up t' the head o' the class!"

"Never gave you away, nor told anything to get the officers after you when I could have talked a lot, did I?"

"That's right, Grotie, ole boy, ye've sure been a friend to me!"

"Well, now, suppose I tell you what I want you to help me in, and you don't see fit to take a hand in the enterprise—which, of course, you might not—can I trust you to keep your mouth shut, and not blab to the officers, and not tell anybody what I've said, nor in any way connect my name with what may happen?"

"Upon my life, you can!"

Grote was a good enough judge of human nature to know that his secret was safe with Seymour. While the latter was, in many ways, a vicious and law-defying individual, yet he had a fund of gratitude toward a friend, that was always safe to rely upon.

"Well, then, I will tell you about the scheme in which I desire your help," pursued the conspirator. "How would you like to assist us temperance folks in mobbing the editor of the paper and tearing up his office?"

"What's that ye're givin' me?" queried Seymour, pricking up his ears in an instant and bringing one

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of them in closer proximity to the speaker's mouth.

"I can get you twenty-five dollars and all you can drink!"

"Drink what? Cold water, ur church social lemonade? I ain't partic'lar fond o' either!"

"No fol-de-rol! No cold water! Bourbon, good old Bourbon, with a bead on it. Can't you imagine you hear it gurgle?" Seymour's imagination was kind of dull that morning. It did not bump up against the ceiling, so to speak, at Mr. Grote's lively suggestion.

"Assist the temperance people," mused James, "I ain't been used to trottin' in that class!" Then as if canvassing the different thoughts contained in his friend's words and coming to the other, he said: "An' yit, ye say I kin have all the good ole Bourbon I want to drink! Grote, that don't sound like a pro-jick comin' from the temperance people. Ye must have some ax o' your own to grind."

"No, it's the temperance people, really and truly. They are going to do it. It's because of criticisms that have appeared in his paper against them. They've got rid of the saloon and now they are going to get rid of him!"

"Air the temperance people up to that kind o' business, now on the dead, air they?" again asked the tough, shaking his head doubtfully. It was evident that, in the language of Shakespeare, "He would not let belief take hold of him."

"Why, of course, they are!" returned Grote with pretended impatience; "won't you believe me?"

"Wal, ef it ain't necessary to our friendship, an' won't interfere with your scheme, I'd prefer not to," returned James with a short laugh. "I know why ye want to pretend it's the temperance people well enough,

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an' that'll do to tell on the outside. But look here, Grote, don't you know ye can't stuff anything like that down my throat? I can call your hand, now, an' ye needn't say another word!"

"Well suppose you do, then," and Grote looked steadily at the roustabout, wondering if the shrewd rascal could thus read his secret thoughts and purposes. He was not long kept in doubt; for the interpretation came with surprising accuracy.

"Ye're doin' this dirty work fur old Doc Leonard. That young feller's bound to marry his gal whuther ur no, and the ole man, true to his mean, 'grouchy' self is goin' to try to ruin him ef he kin. I tell ye what, Grote, my sympathies air with the young 'buck!' "

"Yes," sneered Grote, considerably disconcerted, "I've heard of some animals that are ready to kiss the hand that smites them, and I guess you must be one of that kind!" He had heard of the fight that had taken place between Mr. Howe and Seymour, and that, somehow or other, the editor had gotten the best of it, but had forgotten the particulars.

"No, I'm not, but when a man knocks me out fair an' square an' does it because he's got more manhood in his little finger than I've got in my whole soul, I ain't goin' to hold no grudge again' him!"

"I should think you would be willing to do something for me now, since I've done so much for you." Grote thought it better to choose another tack.

"I am, Grotie, ole boy, what all do ye want to do with the feller?" asked Seymour, and his tone showed signs of "heaving to." "Jest want to smash up his little printin' office? Ef that's all I guess I kin keep my conscience still long enough to sail in

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and help ye out—that is on the terms suggested, ONLY!"

"No, that's only just half of what we want to do! We want to run him out of town and serve him so roughly that he won't come back any more!"

"Oh, that's it, is it?" said James, shaking his head slowly from side to side. "He's an awful good feller to be treated like that. He's the best man in the whole shootin' match, an' that ain't no joke! He don't pray so durn loud as some o' these fellers 'round here, but when it comes to doin' ye a good turn, he gits thar with both feet!"

"Can't help that, Jim. We are not doing this for our health. We all have to do things we don't want to do, in order to get the dollars we use in our business. What I want to know is, are you in on the scheme or not?"

"No, I'm d—d ef I am, ef it means any beatin' up or brusin' the editor!" answered Seymour, with unmistakable positiveness.

"I can trust you to keep your mouth shut and not 'give us away?' "

"I told ye once that ye could!" and they parted.

Grote's proposition and the scheme behind it preyed on James Seymour's mind day and night. He was hard up and abnormally thirsty, and Grote's proposal opened a goodly prospect for the relief of both these harrowing conditions. And yet, such was his feeling of kindly regard and admiration for Mr. Howe that he turned his back upon these allurements. He was bad enough, goodness knows! Evil habits and years of dissipation had reduced him to a pretty low ebb in the tide of character. But he was not totally depraved. He could not forget the gracious young man, and the heroic deed he had done. He might

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have been ready, as he suggested, to assist in tearing up the office at the tempting price of twenty-five dollars and drinks. But for ten or twenty great big bruisers to jump on one good, clean fellow—one whom he regarded so highly—all at once, and give him no more show than a "rabbit," why every particle of Seymour's rugged respect for fair play rebelled against such a cowardly deed.

Sometimes he doubted Grote's ability to get together a sufficient number of "lawless resolute" to enable him to put into execution such a drastic enterprise. But he knew Grote well, and the man who, he felt sure, was at the bottom of the scheme, and became fully satisfied that they would perpetrate the deed if the same were within range of possibility.

By and by, James Seymour resolved that he would be present and take a hand in it. He didn't like to go counter to his old friend Grote, but the prospect for a free-for-all fight was entirely too tempting for him to deprive himself of, even to please his friend. He had too much manhood to want to go into such a melee with the odds all on one side, as it would be if the editor should have no help. But with a few trusty fellows to come to the newspaper man's rescue at the proper moment, why the pleasurable anticipation of such a time as they would have, would keep his blood a little warmer and a little swifter in his veins for several days!

He decided not to raise the "hue and cry" about it beforehand, for several reasons. He had promised Grote that he would not. Then, if he did it would spoil all of the fun. He didn't feel that he ought to stop such a brilliant design in its incipiency, but he did propose to furnish the editor with a few good stout yeomen to help out.

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His first move was to get the aid of Hibson before Grote could get him. This was an easy thing to do. Hibson was a genuine "free lance" and would get out and fight at any time and any place, and upon almost any side for the pure love of fighting. He wasn't mercenary, either; for it was all the same to him whether there was a dollar in it or not. Hibson was soon secured and another robust tough or two, all of whom swore fidelity to the editor and agreed to defend him against all comers.

Seymour kept a close watch on all the maneuvers of Grote, and, likewise, on those of a certain class with whom he was occasionally seen conversing. A few days later he noticed some commotion among the loafers at Barnes' livery stable. Passing closely to a group of two or three of them he overheard just one sentence: "Grote says the job must be done tonight." He resolved to hang about and wait and watch. He posted his allies to hold themselves in readiness.

About twelve o'clock that night, he observed a squad of eight or ten of the same class of men as the livery stable gang slipping along a dark alley toward the suburb nearest Freeport. Seymour, keeping within the shadows, followed closely on their heels. They had scarcely reached the limits of the little city, ere they were met by about the same number of persons, among whom Seymour recognized the Hittle and Jacob boys.

Seymour was surprised when he saw the personnel of the Freeport contingent. They were notorious and dangerous men. They were not good men, physically, but persons who would use a knife or a revolver any day rather than fight a fair fight. For a moment he thought of running to Marshal Wood

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and his deputies. but he felt honor-bound by his promise to Grote. He decided, at least, to secure the aid of another good stout fighter.

Seymour crept more closely to the mob now standing together quietly, to get, if possible, some intimation concerning their plans. Grote had not, as yet, put in his appearance. It was not likely, however, that he would be one of the mob. Men like him and Dr. Leonard usually do such deeds by proxy. It was more than possible that Grote would meet them in their rendezvous and give final directions. He did not appear, however, and Seymour heard no expression of surprise because he did not.

Quarrytown was lighted on what was known as the "moonlight schedule." That is, the lights upon the streets were turned out as soon as the moon began to rise. The moon would not rise that night until about 1:30. Then the electric lights would be at once extinguished, and so anxious was the old engineer at the power house to go home and to bed that no sooner did one small portion of rim begin to thrust itself above the horizon, than he shut off the lights and "lit out" for home. The safest time to make an attack upon the Augur office and its editor, therefore, would be after the lights were out, and before the moon had risen to any height. Seymour judged they were waiting to begin operations until that time. In this he was reassured, when he heard someone ask what time the lights were turned out. This was all he cared to hear and he crept quickly away. There were a few details he wanted to perfect in his plan.

Sam Wilkins, whom the reader will doubtless remember as one of Ezra's friends, was sleeping soundly that night. His mind was not disturbed by

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even a dream until someone began calling right un ler his window.

"Oh, Sam, Sam, wake up! wake up!" Mr. Wilkins jumped out of bed and ran to the window.

"What do you want?" he asked excitedly.

"Get your clothes on and come out here," said the voice. "A friend of yours is in great trouble, and you will be needed soon!"

"Who are you?" asked Sam.

"James Seymour," was the reply.

Although Sam knew the character of Seymour to be that of a drunken tough, yet he, likewise, knew that his intentions were generally fair, and that he would not be likely to do a person against whom he had no ill-will an injury. Sam was as fine a specimen of physical manhood as there was in Quarrytown. He was six feet high and weighed about two hundred pounds. He was, in fact, a college athlete, and famous in baseball and football circles. He did not need, therefore, to fear even James Seymour.

"Do you know there's a mob gatherin' down thar, an' they're goin' to mob the editor of the paper?" broke in Seymour without circumlocution.

"Jeminy Christmas!" ejaculated Mr. Wilkins. "Is that so? Well, then let's hurry!"

"This way," directed James. "Hibson and two more boys are down here. We must go by an' git them."

"They'll stand by the editor and help us out?" said Sam with a trifle of misgiving.

"Bet yer d—n life, they will! I've got that all fixed!" was the answer.

They soon found the trio Seymour had described waiting the summons to go to battle. Hibson and the two had each secured a good stout fence picket.

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"Git ye a club, Seymour" suggested one of the boys.

"Don't want no club!" was the reply, "me two good fists will give 'em what they need!" and they charged toward the scene of approaching conflict on the "double quick."

CHAPTER XXV.

ON THE afternoon preceding the events described in the latter part of the previous chapter, Ezra H. Howe sat in his office feeling pretty comfortable. The financial indisposition of the **Augur** showed signs of improvement. In another realm, the realm of a higher and nobler ideal, where most of the young man's hopes were centered, he had reason to be even better satisfied. As he sat thus and felicitated himself, there came a timid little knock on his outer door.

"Come in!" he said brusquely, dropping out of his "day dream" and beginning to take note of the actual. The door opened modestly and a comely young woman stepped inside. Mr. Howe had to glance twice before he remembered the face.

"Ah," he said, politely arising and approaching, "this is Miss Dunraven!" and he led her to a chair. "This is the first time we have met since the masquerade," and he smiled at the remembrance of the occasion.

The young lady did not smile. She only sighed hopelessly. She sank into the proffered chair and gazed at the floor dejectedly. Her eyes showed unmistakable signs of weeping. She remained silent so long that Mr. Howe became nervous and fidgety. She evidently had a somber errand, probably to procure the publication of an obituary. But then, he hadn't heard of any of her family departing this life.

"What can I do for you, Miss Dunraven?" he asked at length.

"Oh, sir;" she replied, "I feel so bad about it.

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I can hardly talk! I have been with Miss Aimee Leonard this afternoon and she has made me her most unwilling messenger!" Ezra could only stare. He had no premonition of what was coming.

"She begged me with tears in her eyes," the young lady continued, "to come to you and hand you these letters!" And she gave Mr. Howe a package neatly tied about with blue ribbon. The young man gazed a moment or two, and then mechanically untied the parcel. He recognized at once that before his very eyes were the sweet, tender, loving epistles he had written Miss Leonard since their acquaintance.

"How did **you** get possession of these letters?" he demanded.

"I was just proceeding to tell you, Mr. Howe," said the young woman, demurely. "She gave them to me and told me to bring them to you. She said the engagement between yourself and her must be broken forever! And, sir, she wept when she said it!"

Ezra glared like a wild animal at the intruder.

"I don't believe a word of it!" he snapped.

The young woman shook her head slowly and sadly, and sighed deeply.

"I wish it were untrue myself!" she said simply.

"What else did she say, or do you say she said?" he demanded, losing some of the faith he had been adjured ever to maintain.

"She told me to tell you that she could not longer thwart the wishes of her dear old father, and that she had concluded, owing to his age, to carry out his earnest desire, and—and——"

Blame the woman, why did she hesitate at that point?

"And what, Miss Dunraven?" Suspicion and jealousy which had remained dormant ever so long were

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beginning to bestir themselves like vultures, when a taint is in the air! "I suppose, according to **you**, that she is going to marry young Alison?"

"Yes," the young lady admitted, "that **is** what she said!" Then with a frank and engaging smile, somewhat chastened and sweetened by her previous sadness, she volunteered this startling intelligence: "They are to be married the sixth of June!"

Mr. Howe almost tumbled off his chair! Could it be possible? His Aimee so fickle, so treacherous? No, no; he never would believe it! And yet—and yet—jealousy suggested, there were his letters returned, and besides, how did Miss Dunraven know they had been engaged unless Aimee had told her? The message certainly bore **some** marks of genuineness!

"And here, Mr. Howe, is one of your photographs which she prized very highly, and this." She handed the young man the ring, their engagement ring! which he had given his betrothed, and she had promised, as she looked into his eyes with a face as true as an angel's, that she would wear that ring forever as a token of her fidelity to him!

"Where is Miss Leonard now?" he asked springing from his chair and seizing his hat. He would throw himself at her feet regardless of a dozen Dr. Leonards, and there learn if this awful message were true!

"She has gone away from Quarrytown to be gone several weeks," was the answer.

"When did she go?" again he asked.

"I just parted from her at the depot, not thirty minutes ago. She took the afternoon train for the city!"

Young Howe, regardless of any and all proprieties, left his visitor in possession of his office and raced downstairs. At the foot of the stairway he encounter-

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ed Frank Grote, who appeared to be casually passing.

"How-de-do, how-de-do, Mr. Howe!" said Mr. Grote, in an affable and friendly manner. This was the first time he had spoken to Ezra since the boycott.

"Mr. Grote," asked Mr. Howe, anxiously, "tell me if you know, is Miss Aimee Leonard, the doctor's daughter at home?"

"I can just tell you exactly, Mr. Howe," said Grote. "She is **not** at home! She is in the city. She is going to marry a young fellow up there, so the doctor was telling me, and their wedding was set for the sixth of June. That's only about three weeks away. Miss Aimee, at the invitation of the young fellow's mother, has gone to spend a couple of weeks at the home of her intended, to kind of get acquainted with her parents-in-law before the marriage. I tell you June roses will be in demand at that wedding because both families are rich and aristocratic!"

Gall and wormwood! Faith, beautiful faith had well-nigh lost its ascendancy, and those two twin unclean spirits, jealousy and suspicion, had almost taken possession! Would he go **there** to find her? There was no train until morning and it was a long drive. What would he do? He rushed away to the depot, and the fact that Aimee Leonard had taken the afternoon train for the city was corroborated by the station agent and several others!

At about the same time that James Seymour appeared under the window of Sam Wilkins' sleeping room, someone knocked at Ezra Howe's door. The editor had retired to his chamber, disrobed himself, and had tried in vain to sleep.

"Who's there?" he asked in response to the knock.

"Mr. Howe, oh, Mr. Howe!" a voice soft and low called; "are you awake?"

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"Yes," answered the editor, "what d'ye want?"

"Will ye please come down stairs at once? There's a man lying on the sidewalk below, and I'm afraid he's badly hurt!"

The voice was kindly and the call such as would appeal to any heart. So the young man hastily dressed himself and went below.

He had no sooner stepped out upon the sidewalk below than two stalwart fellows glided into the hallway at his back. These he noticed with alarm, and he likewise saw before him a group of dark figures, a dozen or more standing silent and motionless. Suddenly one of those behind him gave him a push that sent him out into the very midst of the silent group, at the same time shouting:

"Here he is, boys! Hang him! hang him!"

At this the whole group closed in around the editor, beating and striking him with great violence. It was a moment before he was fully alive to the emergency, and then he fought and kicked and struggled like a tiger. Many cruel blows were rained upon him, in exchange for which he gave more than one bloody nose. He was soon overpowered, his hands securely fastened, and he was placed astride a long pole which was borne on the shoulders of four members of the mob.

"We'll give him a coat o' tar an' feathers, an' ride him out o' town on a rail!" shouted one of his assailants. Just then some one threw some sticky substance upon him, covering his head and shoulders and trickling down upon his hands. Another cast a bag of feathers over the editor, many of which blew hither and thither in the eddying breeze, but enough of them stuck to him to make him look as white as a goose in the moonlight! The crowd laughed and

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jeered at him in derision as he was borne along, going, he knew not whither. The situation was growing desperate, and the luckless editor suddenly found a tongue and a voice.

"Help! help!" He never knew before that his lungs were so sound and so trustworthy! In response to his resounding call, Howe heard the familiar voice of Sam Wilkins, shouting:

"Stay with them, Ezra, old boy! We're coming!"

In another second or so, the two parties came together in a fight that was terrific. Blows, curses and yells filled the air. Ezra saw James Seymour and Sam Wilkins rush side by side upon the gang that had assaulted him and men went down right and left before their furious blows. Those of his assailants who had been carrying him, dropped both pole and editor and took to their heels. But some seven or eight stood their ground and fought fiercely. Clubs and rocks were used freely, and both sides were bleeding from many wounds. The editor's enemies still had two to one in numbers, but Sam and Seymour were resistless and were rapidly clearing every obstacle before them.

"Buster! Buster!" shouted one of the fighters, who had just gone down before Seymour's fist, "use your revolver on that d—n Seymour, quick!"

The next second a revolver glittered in the hands of one of the men and was leveled full and fair at James Seymour's breast. Seymour saw his danger, but was too far away to reach his would-be murderer or save himself. The weapon snapped viciously, but failed to discharge. Again was the revolver leveled, but just at this second Sam Wilkins' fence picket swung around like a shinny club and caught the pistol arm between the wrist and the elbow, and the bones

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were broken like crockery! The revolver was thrown a dozen paces away and discharged harmlessly.

"Thank 'ee, Sam, that was jest in the nick o' time!" shouted Seymour, and the next instant he was upon the fellow, and had struck him a blow in the face that sent him tumbling head over heels at least fifty feet. At this the editor's assailants fled and Ezra was in the hands of his friends!

Mr. Howe was in a sorry plight, indeed! He was bleeding from a number of cuts and bruises. These were painful enough, and disgraceful enough, to be sure, but the severest hurt to him was the fact that his head, face and clothes were smeared with tar and he was feathered over in some places like a fowl! He looked so ludicrous and odd and queer, that when he was taken into the light at the hotel, even sympathetic Sam Wilkins could hardly suppress a smile at his friend's expense! At that time not less than ten curious persons had arrived, and the unhappy young man was made the butt of many a ribald joke and sneer, which he could not help hearing because they were made practically in his presence. One fun-maker asked, "What is it?" and the titter went round. Another wanted to know, "Where did they ketch it?" and that remark was funnier than ever. But when a third suggested that "It must be fond o' yaller-legged chicken," some of the coarse on-lookers were so wonderfully amused that they had to go outside to laugh!

As soon as the hotel people could make arrangements, Howe was taken out of the office to the bath room and away from the cruel, insulting crowd. There his gallant rescuers worked with him until morning, dressing his wounds and getting the tar out of his hair. Another suit was procured and when the day-

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light came he was fairly presentable, save one eye which persisted in assuming an egg-plant purple.

As soon as it was light enough the editor went with his little party to the printing office, and found that a division of the mob had made sad havoc there. His printing press had been utterly destroyed, and his type had been knocked into everlasting "pi," and the remnants thereof tumbled out of the windows! To publish any more papers with that outfit would be impossible. The poor fellow sank into a chair and wept disconsolately! He did not care so much for the loss of his office, nor for the ugly bruises which he bore upon his head and face. But that other fact, the unfaithfulness of his beloved Aimee, which he now firmly believed, coupled with his terrible disgrace and humiliation, almost broke his heart! To think that a people among whom he had lived and for whom he had such kindly regard could be so cruel! And now the report would go forth that he had been tarred and feathered and ridden on a rail by the better element (!) of Quarrytown! Those coarse bumpkins would laugh and sneer and make sport when they described how excruciatingly ludicrous and absurd he appeared standing there in the hotel office! And she, the happy bride of Elbert Alison, would hear all about it, of course, and that hurt worse than anything else!

He had two images of Aimee Leonard in his mind's eye, the former, faithful sweetheart, who had promised that together they should travel down life's weary road, and the pathway before **them** had stretched away in the distance strewn with flowers, and radiant with sunshine! And there was another image of a perfidious one, who had trampled upon her promises and blighted all his hopes! He tried to imagine

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what she would do when they told about his sad plight. Sometimes, when he thought of her as of yore, he fancied she would weep at his distress, and was soothed because of her sympathy. Again when he pictured her in her new role, he said within his soul that she would laugh, too, and the thought drove him well-nigh to distraction!

The young man was completely demoralized, and no wonder. The bravest men dread an unseen, an ambushed foe. Left to feel as he now felt, that an entire community was against him, and ready to do him foul injury under the cover of the night, was it not enough to make the stoutest heart grow faint and weak. He had no longer any business there and why should he stay among a people who were so vengeful and merciless? So that day he took his departure to the city of Cherryvale, his former home.

Sam Wilkins and James Seymour were the only two citizens of Quarrytown who accompanied him to the depot to bid him a last farewell. After Seymour had shaken hands with the ex-editor for the last time, the train was then starting, he blew his nose like a trumpet, wiped his eyes with his coat sleeve, and said:

"I could a' saved ye some o' this trouble, Mr. Howe, ef I could only a' understood half o' the damned meanness they had in their hearts to do!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE Alisons, father and son, were the guests of Dr. John B. Leonard. It was Thursday night toward the latter part of May. The visitors had arrived prior to the evening meal, of which they had, according to prearrangement, partaken. Miss Aimee had not come down during the progress of the dinner, notwithstanding the presence of these distinguished persons from the city, nor had she offered any explanation or apology for her conduct in that regard. Some time after dinner the visitors stationed themselves in the front parlor and sent an urgent invitation for the young lady to come down. It was not long after the invitation had been sent that she stepped into the apartment. She seemed to be considerably surprised when she saw who her father's guests were. The elder Alison arose, took her hand, and in a manner meant to be kindly, said:

"My daughter, I am glad to see you; for it has been some time since I have had that pleasure." Then he added, trying with some difficulty to sort out an appropriate compliment, "My son praises your charms the livelong day!" Here the old fellow smiled in a sly way in the direction of Alison, junior, and the doctor. "And I see he hasn't exaggerated the subject a particle. In fact, as the Queen of Sheba said about Solomon, 'The half has never yet been told!'"

An old lawyer who has been buried up to the eyes in dry law pleading and practice for forty years makes but a sorry figure trying to be courtly and gallant. But no one on earth could make him believe it! The well-meant compliment was utterly lost on the

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sad-faced Aimee. She quickly withdrew her hand from Mr. Alison's grasp, and sank into the nearest chair. Then she began to sob as if her heart were broken. If there is anything expressly calculated to put an average man in hot water and at the same time cause cold chills to chase each other down his spine, it's to see a young and beautiful woman in tears. There's a natural chivalry incident to our masculinity, and that, doubtless, is what makes us tremble and quail at such a sight. These three men were at once thrown into all sorts of confusion and every preconceived plan, whether of speech or action, was immediately upset at the very threshold of its consummation. The old lawyer had made a fortune at speech-making and palaver, but his kind of oratory at best would hardly suit this sort of case. He had studied up beforehand many an eloquent and persuasive sentence that he should drop like sweetest music into the ear of the coy and somewhat obstinate maiden, in his son's behalf. But the present development of the case put to flight all his intended eloquence, and instead of uttering beautiful sentences and pronouncing courteous compliments, he found himself repeating over and over again these words in about the same routine:

"Oh, come now, don't cry! There now, don't weep! Please, pretty one, don't go on like that! Pray tell us what's the trouble!"

The old doctor was at once more deeply affected than either of the other two. His dear, patient Aimee! She who had always been so cheerful, so gay, so light-hearted to be thus so miserable, so hurt! She had during her whole life been a demure, obedient, little girl, and had always received his tyranny and abuse without resentment. Whatever he had done

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heretofore, had apparently produced no lasting effect upon her buoyant nature. She had always quickly recovered and had become again full of happiness and song. But this last, wretched, miserable happening (and it was all his own planning, too) had produced a permanent condition of sadness in his daughter's sensitive mind. He sat and gazed at his weeping child, while his own eyes filled with tears and a big lump arose in his throat, that, in vain, he tried to swallow. The younger Alison stared with open eyes and mouth.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" sobbed the unhappy girl, apparently oblivious to her surroundings "what will he think of me, the daughter of such a cruel father? Can he respect or love me any more when he learns that it was my father that raised the awful mob against him!" and the poor girl sobbed all the louder.

The event was assuming a decidedly unpleasant phase for Dr. Leonard for several reasons. Mr. Alison eyed him sternly and was about to administer some rebuke, but instead he turned to Aimee and asked her in tender, sympathetic tones:

"Daughter, you cannot surely think it was your father who organized the mob against the young editor, can you?"

"Oh, I know he did it! I know he did it!" sobbed the stricken Aimee.

"Leonard," he said turning in the direction where the old doctor sat with his head bent down upon his breast, "you told me you had nothing to do with that affair, otherwise you know I should not have been here!"

No affirmation, nor denial; nothing came from the lips of the father.

"My pretty one," again addressing the young

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lady, "I assure you that neither I nor my son have had anything to do with this deed, the perpetration of which has given you so much sorrow. Nor would we have come here tonight had we believed your father a party to the affair. I might as well tell you frankly," he continued, lawyer-like, knowing in advance that he was bound to lose his case, and yet determined to make the best showing possible. "You see I am getting somewhat advanced in age. In the course of nature, I shall not be here very many years. My son, Elbert, is my only heir. During my life I have accumulated quite a comfortable amount of this world's goods, and I am desirous of seeing my son married and settled down for life. He has expressed a decided preference for you, Miss Aimee; so very great, indeed, has been that preference, that I feared his whole life's happiness might be destroyed should you reject his suit. It is, therefore, deep affection for my son that has prompted my presence here tonight."

The young woman had dashed aside her tears and was now listening to the old lawyer with her beautiful eyes fixed steadily upon his face.

"Your father and I," he continued—he was apparently wound up and just had to run down—"while you and my son were yet babes in your cradles—being old friends, you know—were pleased to pledge each other that you two should wed when you should become man and woman. I came here tonight in good faith to tell you that I, as Elbert's father, have given my consent and approval to his choice if you will this day accept his hand, being sure that he has long ago given you his heart! This, dear Miss, was the occasion of my coming, and if, by so doing, I have inadvertently given you offense or in any way hurt your

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feelings, I must humbly crave your pardon!" Here the courteous and honorable old counselor bowed most profoundly.

Aimee had risen from her seat, and was now standing erect, radiant, beautiful and defiant. The time had come for her to assert her dignity as a woman!

"Mr. Alison," she said, her voice trembling slightly at first, but becoming clear and full-tored and positive as she proceeded, "your coming and your message here tonight **has** given me hurt, but the pardon you have so courteously asked is freely given. If your son's future happiness is in danger, I regret it. But if it is, it is no fault of mine. I have informed him repeatedly that I cannot be his wife. I am not rebellious, I am not disobedient. But even my own father has no authority to invade those sacred rights which I possess as a free-born woman. It is my privilege to choose whom I shall marry, and I am in no sense bound by any arrangement which you and he entered into twenty years ago! I say, as I have said before, that I have plighted my hand and my heart to another. Yes, sir," she said, turning toward her father with more defiance than he had ever seen her show before; "even to the victim of your malice and revenge. I am his promised wife, sir; and never shall that troth by me be broken.

"He may disregard our mutual vows, and I shall never blame him if he does. He may hereafter hate and abhor the daughter of such a cruel father! But, from my standpoint, he has done nothing unworthy or untrue, and though I may never see him again, I shall forever be his faithful betrothed! I bid you good evening, gentlemen!"

Dr. Leonard watched his daughter until she had

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disappeared through the doorway. He never had been so proud of her in all his life. She had awakened his sympathy, too. Yet he felt that there was now a barrier between himself and his own which neither time nor favoring circumstances could ever remove. For him there was no repentance, though he should seek it with tears! He had, indeed, committed the "unpardonable sin."

Mrs. Leonard had heard everything. She was in no sense an eavesdropper, but the deep interest that good matron had in her daughter, whose present distress was apparent to her, had caused her to take her position in the rear room of the double parlor. She had been a friend to Mr. Howe from the first. She had remarked his genial disposition, his earnest-heartedness, and his nobility of character. In her eye there was no comparison between the self-reliant, manly young editor and the petted and effeminate Alison. However, she had been more or less overawed by her domineering husband just as Aimee had been. Since the night of the mob she had made some inquiry among the anti-saloon leaders, and had learned that they disavowed the desperate deed with vehemence and evident sincerity. She had, therefore, arrived at the opinion, in which her daughter shared, that the assault upon the young newspaper man had been instigated by none other than the doctor himself, for reasons which none better knew than herself and Aimee. Both she and Aimee had resolved no longer to cringe before him, but to let him feel the force of their resentment on the first occasion. Now the opportunity for both mother and daughter had arrived.

Mrs. Leonard pushed aside the silken curtains and came into the room. She advanced directly to

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where her husband sat and, looking him squarely in the eye with a glance that neither faltered nor quailed before him, she said:

"John Leonard, I think it is high time for you to pause in your mad career of cruelty and pride! Some time you will be called upon to answer for the deeds you have done! If not before an earthly court, you should remember that there is still a higher tribunal, from whose mandates you cannot flee! The wrong you have perpetrated is infinite, and were you the only person affected thereby, it were bad enough, God knows! But I seriously fear that you have broken our poor little daughter's heart! Oh, dear! oh, dear! Such an innocent, patient, self-sacrificing, little darling as she has always been! Do you know, sir," again addressing her husband, who now sat with bowed head, and pressing home the same sorrowful query, "that you have probably broken her heart?"

The old doctor put the end of his gold-headed cane in his mouth. Maybe he might be able to push that lump down! He looked steadily at the floor for quite a while. Then removing the cane—the lump wouldn't budge—he said:

"I fear I have, Mariah, indeed I do!"

By and by the conversation was resumed in that room, but it was no longer concerning Aimee. It was, however, a desultory and unsatisfactory conversation at best, and was soon terminated by the Alisons taking their departure and driving back to the city.

Dr. Leonard's heart had been strangely touched by the pathetic spectacle of his beloved daughter's distress. He was heartily ashamed of himself. More than that, he was deeply repentant. But the immense mountain of pride, the accretions of years had not yet been washed away by the tears of that repentance!

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He didn't sleep much that night. He wanted day to come again. He wanted to look once more into his daughter's glorious face. He wanted to see her sitting once more at his table, his idolized Aimee! He resolved again and again in his stubborn old heart, that as soon as morning came he would go to her, take her dear little hands in his, and humbly crave her pardon! She would grant it—he was beginning to hope she would! His sin had been so grievous, it had been so cruel. But she was always such a tender, forgiving, little body! How sweet it would be just to be forgiven! Then he would say to her—yes, he would say it—that the one whom she loved and against whom he had done such a cowardly wrong should come and be welcome in his home, and they should be married there, and with his blessing!—! Maybe he would better use the word sanction under the circumstances! And the twain should have one-half of his fortune! That would make up to him for the loss of his little print shop! Ha! ha! Such a wife as Aimee and at least fifty thousand dollars in houses and cash ought to atone to a fellow for a few thumps on the pate and a black eye, or such a trifle! Ha! ha! Confound that lump! it would stick in his throat!

The old man laughed and cried to himself just like Old Scrooge did the next morning after he waked up and found that the ghosts of the Christmas Past, Present and To-Come were all a dream. Goodness! how long the night was! It seemed to him that it had been at least three years since that scene in the parlor had occurred.

The morning dawned at last, and Dr. Leonard was positively hungry for a glance at his beloved Aimee. How he longed for her to come down! The breakfast hour arrived.

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"Call Aimee!" he said eagerly to the servant. The servant soon returned with this startling announcement:

"Miss Aimee, ain't in her room, an' she ain't been there all night; for her bed ain't been slept in at all."

The old man jumped from the table, and he and his wife ran upstairs to the room their daughter had occupied, as fast as they could go. They found the servant's report true. The dainty little room was empty, and the bed untouched. On the dresser was a little note in Aimee's handwriting which said:

Darling Mamma:—

I have decided to run away from home. I don't know just where I shall go, but anywhere to be away from Papa after the cruel deed he has done. I don't even want my dear lover to know where I am. For, though he may forgive the deed, he can never forget that it was *my* father who perpetrated that cowardly act! And I can never look him in the face again, and remember that such is the fact! Good bye, dear Mamma! I will write to you some day. Your loving daughter,

AIMEE.

"There, John Leonard, there's a sample of your handiwork!" exclaimed the wife, holding the daughter's message before his face. "For forty years you have cultivated an insulting and overbearing disposition towards your neighbors and your friends. Your daughter, the sweetest child that ever lived, was the last target toward which you aimed your malicious tyranny, and every one whom she loved or who loved her must be crushed to satisfy your ungovernable pride. I hope you are satisfied now with what you have done!"

The old fellow couldn't say a word, not one word! It was only too true, and no one could have a deeper realization of that fact than did he. That lump was

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in his throat, and it was very much like Banquo's Ghost, in this: "It would **not** down!" His eyes filled with tears and his lips trembled, while his wife buried her face in Aimee's untouched bed, and had a good cry.

They went down, by and by, to their comfortless breakfast. The old doctor thought the best thing he knew to do was to try to digest that lump, that would arise in his throat all the time and almost choke him! So he took a bite of biscuit, then a spoonful of egg, then a sip of coffee. It was no use, he couldn't get a thing around that blamed lump! Surely, he must let go all his pride and boo! hoo! like a child, or his chest would swell up and burst! Then he began to say in a broken voice:

"Mariah, I—I only want t—to say—that if ever my sweet child—ev—ever sits down in her dear old place again as a member of m—my family!" Here he laid his hand on Aimee's vacant chair with a tenderness in his touch that no one had seen him manifest for years—"Oh, if she e—ever does, I—I will show her how much I love her, m—y blessed darling!"

Here the wretched, old man began to sob and cry as if **his** heart were broken, too! And that dear wife, stirred up by the love and devotion that had been a part of her very existence these many years, no sooner saw the earnest repentance, than her forgiveness came like a torrent and washed the past away! She folded her arms around his neck and laying her cheek upon his whitening hair, mingled her tears with his! Oh, blessed repentance! Washed are thy garments in the crimson tide! And it is only through thy ministrations that the finite shall ever be fit to kneel in the uncreated glory of the **Infinite!**

Poor, old Esau—he sought repentance and sought

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in it tears! But he had filled himself with that same red pottage, and lost his birthright! And so it was with Dr. Leonard; his good resolutions came too late! For his beautiful little Aimee was never again a member of his household from that unhappy night in which she left, never!

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE treatment Ezra H. Howe had received at the hands of his cowardly assailants, coupled with the destruction of his printing office, embittered him against Quarrytown and its people. He retired to the friendlier precincts of his native town. There were saloons in Cherryvale, and that to spare. The residents, however, were very complacent and comfortable in regard to them. There were, likewise, many churches and church people there, but they all appeared "at ease in Zion" and were making no particular effort—except in a few prayers—to drive out these dens of iniquity as the Quarrytown people had been pleased to call them. But there was no danger—to Ezra at least—from mobs, and that was "a consummation devoutly to be wished."

Mr. Howe had been reared within the hospitable boundaries of Cherryvale. The people there had known him from his boyhood, and he, in turn, was well acquainted with them. In fact, he counted his friends by the score; of enemies he had none. So he felt a great burden of apprehension and anxiety lifted from his shoulders when he found himself once more among those who were disposed to be frank and open-hearted. The happenings that had kept him in a constant state of solicitude and the town in a state of turmoil, he was glad to dismiss from his memory like the flitting shadows of an ugly nightmare. Now he was surrounded by friends who were not only sympathetic but helpful as well. He had not been long in Cherryvale until a vacancy occurred in the

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high school, and the school board was kind enough to invite him to fill the place at once, at a good salary. So he went to work, determined if possible, to forget the bitter past, and to make up the losses that had overwhelmed him at Quarrytown.

The sixth of June arrived, and Mr. Howe almost held his breath, expecting to see in the city papers the announcement of Aimee's marriage. Instead, however, the morning mails brought him this characteristic letter:

Quarrytown, Ind., June 5. 18—.

Mr. Ezra H. Howe,

Cherryvale, Ind.

Dear Sir:—I should think you would be making your presence known occasionally in this vicinity. Many strange things have happened since you left this town only a few weeks ago. My dear cousin soon came to the conclusion that her father was none other than the one who organized the mob against you. And the awful thought that perhaps you would cease to love her because of what her father had done (the precious little goose) almost broke her heart. A few nights ago she ran away from home, and no one, not even Aunt Mariah, knows where she now is! Sometimes, in our anxiety, we fear suicide, but I think I know Aimee better than to believe that terrible hypothesis, only when I allow myself to become nervous and fidgety about her. And, to add to the general misfortunes, which they say never come singly, her father became ill the very next day after she went away and has grown steadily and rapidly worse ever since. He has now become so ill as to be delirious and, in my opinion, he will never leave his bed until he leaves it for his last resting place in the cemetery.

He raves and calls for Aimee all the time. He often couples your name with hers, and then he screams so loudly that he can be heard across the street. I do wish you would come over here. Our minds turn to you as a friend in need. I have told Auntie that you would be the very one to go after Aimee and bring her home, and Auntie, after some hesitation,

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has consented to have me write you. If you could just tell the little dunce that it doesn't make any difference in your love for her what her father did (which of course it doesn't, does it?) I think that will be all that is necessary. I can hardly account for Aimee's present conduct, any more than I can account for yours, going away and never writing or saying a word! Aimee's fidelity to you has been wonderful! You ought to be ashamed to go away and never say one word or send any message! Don't care what old Uncle Doctor may have done to you! She was always a dutiful, patient girl. Never was away from home any length of time before, nor any very great distance. But who can apprehend what effect a deed like her father did (I take it for granted he did it; they all say he did, at least) will have on a sensitive, high-spirited girl like Aimee? Involving her lover as it did! And, he, great big clump, going away and never saying aye or nay or anything! I don't doubt but that you have suffered, but so has poor little cousin, and the worst of it all was that she got it in her head that you hated her because of what her father did!

Can't you come over? You don't know how badly we need you!

Yours most truly,

KATIE L. WORKS,

Ezra H. Howe was stirred up in a moment over the surprising news from Quarrytown. Aimee had run away! Nobody knew where she was! She might be a suicide! His faithful little darling! He almost hated himself because he had allowed the cheap falsehood brought him by Susie Dunraven to deceive him and cause him to doubt Aimee, and after she had adjured him so sweetly always to have faith! He felt unworthy of her, she so true, so loving, so faithful, while he had been so suspicious, so jealous, so narrow!

The excitable Katie threw the very kind of inflammable material into his camp that caused him to take fire forthwith. Before noon he had secured a substitute teacher in his stead, the term had almost closed for the summer vacation, anyhow, and by 2

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o'clock he had packed his grip, gathered together his available funds, and was on his way across country to Quarrytown, a twenty-five mile drive. Thence he would travel anywhere and everywhere until he found the one who was lost. He would tell her, he would assure her, that whatever her father might or might not have done, he would in no wise love her less! What did he care for that blamed old mob! What if he did get a few bruises and some tar in his hair, he was none the worse for them now! Suppose he did get his type knocked into pi and his printing press smashed into smithereens? He was, in fact, glad of it! He could do better teaching anyhow! What did all these things amount to, compared with the peerless being whom he had lost? Why, they were husks and shells and trash! Could he but find her and tell her all about it he would be happy again. But if he could not, if she were gone forever, then his life would be a dreary blank! The picture of trying to live without her which his imagination was constantly drawing as he whirled along, was too unutterably sad to contemplate. Yet he would contemplate it in spite of himself! He would find her, that he would!

It was nightfall when he dismissed the liveryman who had driven him to the gate of the Leonard mansion. As he approached the hall door he noticed that the lights' burned low inside the rooms, and the nurses and others could be seen walking softly and on tiptoe for fear of disturbing an invalid who for sixty hours had struggled between life and death in a delirium so wild and feverish that at times he had to be held in bed. Mr. Howe tried to ring the doorbell, but its sound had been muffled purposely. The little noise he did make, however, was quickly an-

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swered by a watcher on the inside, and the door was opened by none other than Katie herself, who appeared to be so glad, to see him that Ezra once thought the enthusiastic girl would throw her arms around his neck and kiss him in spite of her evident resolution not to do so. She at once ushered Mr. Howe into the room that he sadly remembered to have been glorified by the presence of Aimee when he had been there before. Now there was something uncanny and unreal about the apartment, doubtless because of the absence of the beautiful Aimee, coupled with the fear that she might never more be found

"Oh, I'm so glad you have come!" gasped Katie, both her hands in his. "I have been watching and waiting for you every hour since I wrote you the letter. I was going to telegraph, but I knew you would get the letter in the morning anyway." Miss Works was talking as rapidly as she could, being as much out of breath as a person who had been running.

"We have placed such store on you, Auntie Leonard and I. She believes you can find Aimee if anybody can. The doctor is so ill you know, and unable to recognize his wife or anybody else, and Auntie is kept near him all the time. So you see it is necessary that someone else go in search of the runaway. Who is so perfectly proper for such an errand as yourself, her affianced husband? Auntie says the doctor, before he got out of his head, was awfully sorry for the way he had acted and said that if ever Aimee should come home again you and she should be married right here in his own house with his full and free consent. So you see, you are the one upon whom we all depend now. I will slip into the sick room, and have Auntie come out. The poor, old doctor is sleeping now for the first time

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in many hours. We are feeling somewhat encouraged over his condition though no one can tell how long it will last."

Katie slipped quietly out of the room and soon returned, followed by Mrs. Leonard. The old lady's eyes filled with tears as she saw the stalwart form of the young man before her. Her lips trembled and she could scarcely talk. She took Mr. Howe's hand in hers and held it as tenderly as if he had been her own son, indeed.

"Mr. Howe, I am so glad there is someone to whom we may appeal with confidence at such a time as this," she said. "Notwithstanding the ill-treatment you have received at the hands of one who is supposed to choose the associates and the friendships of this family, I, as the temporary head at least, welcome you here and that most sincerely. I assure you that no one's arrival has been looked for and longed for more earnestly than yours. More than that, were it to be done over, I believe my husband would adopt a different policy in regard to your engagement with our daughter, and I have every reason for believing that he would not oppose your marriage nor seek to thwart our dear girl's own selection in the manner I fear he has done!"

Ezra listened with gratified interest. But after all, there was little enjoyment in anything with Aimee gone, and no one knowing whither she had fled or what had become of her. His deep anxiety was to learn of her. They seated themselves, and Mrs. Leonard continued:

"I suppose, of course, that you have been apprised of the fact that our precious daughter has run away. None of us know where she has gone. She came to the conclusion that her father organized

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the mob against you, and it so wrought upon her mind that she was almost beside herself. She seemed to think that, should you find it out, you could never esteem her any more, and the thought almost broke her heart. She left a note saying she would write some time, but so far has failed to do so."

"Have you any idea as to her destination?" anxiously asked the young man.

"No; I have no very definite idea respecting the place she would be most likely to go. I suppose, however, that she must have gone among my relatives. I have a sister living in Herkimer County, New York. She and her husband were here on a visit about a year ago. They took a great fancy to Aimee and urged her to visit them. Indeed, they would hardly go home without her. Possibly she has gone thither. Then I have two brothers, prosperous farmers, living in Douglas County, Illinois. They live near each other and have sons and daughters about Aimee's own age. My daughter was there two or three years ago, and stayed several weeks. Having been there once, it would not surprise me much if she had gone there the second time."

Mrs. Leonard looked down at the floor musingly a few moments, and then continued:

"She must be at my sister's in New York, or else in Douglas County. And yet, since she has gone away, I have written and telegraphed both of these places, and received answers from all three families. They say, without equivocation, that she is not there and has not been there. That, of course, would be a positive falsehood were she at any of their homes. To be a party to such an untruth would be entirely foreign to Aimee's character, and, likewise, to that of my brother and sister. If she did not want her

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father to know her whereabouts, they might, at her request, do something to mislead us. But none of them would utter a positive falsehood. I telegraphed them all yesterday, and have received answers from both my brothers. My sister has not yet answered the message. I augur from that that my runaway daughter has at last arrived there."

It did not impress Ezra that way. He believed that Aimee had run away after the most careful deliberation, and he thought it improbable that she would go immediately to the home of her mother's relatives, for that would be the first place where they would seek her.

"Then you have no other relatives save those whom you have mentioned and Mrs. Works?" he queried.

"Oh, yes; indeed, ours is a large family. I have another brother and sister, and you will be not a little surprised when you find out who and what they are. My other brother is a priest of the Catholic church, and my other sister is a nun. Brother Francis Xavier Amiee (Aimee is our family name, you know) left our church, the Presbyterian, while a mere boy and became a Catholic. He was graduated from one of their great universities in Europe and afterwards traveled a great deal. There is scarcely a city of prominence on that continent that he has not been in. He is now located near South Bend, Indiana, and is a professor in the University of Notre Dame. He is a finished scholar and one of the sweetest and most Christianlike of men. He visited us only once during Aimee's lifetime. During his stay he became very fond of our little girl, whom he always called his "dainty little niece." She learned to regard him with much respect and veneration. That was

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five years ago, and he has scarcely written since. Dr. Leonard and he didn't take kindly to each other. The doctor wanted to argue religion with him all the time. He seemed to think he could convince the priest of the 'error of his way.' Brother Francis parried his thrusts in that direction for quite a while. At last he turned upon the doctor and they had a famous argument. My husband wasn't anything like a match for my brother in either skill or learning, and the result was that the doctor lost his temper. But the gentle, sweet-tempered priest came out of it as smiling as ever. It produced a coolness, however, and it seemed to me that my brother felt that he was no longer welcome in our home after that. He has never been back since. The sister of whom I spoke lives near Ottumwa, Iowa. She is the only member of our family whom my brother could persuade to become a Catholic after he joined that church. She became a nun, and is, likewise, carefully educated. She is now Mother Superior in a convent out there on the banks of the Des Moines river, a score of miles from Ottumwa."

Here Mrs. Leonard left her seat and slipped noiselessly into the sick room. The invalid was sleeping placidly and she soon returned.

"It is one of the remote possibilities in this case," she said, continuing to discuss the question of her daughter's whereabouts, "that Aimee may have gone to her Uncle Francis, though I hardly think she has done so. She is a faithful Presbyterian. Yet I am free to say that of all men of my acquaintance, there is none to whom I would sooner go for friendship and help in time of trouble than to him. I would say this even if he were no kin of mine. If she has gone to Francis, and told him about the things she

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thinks her father has done against you and herself, it might be a long while before Dr. Leonard would hear anything of her whereabouts. I don't think it worth your while to go to Notre Dame. Better go to New York."

"Well, I will follow your suggestion, at least, to that extent, but I have some plans of my own as well," said Ezra arising and preparing to depart.

Mrs. Leonard opened a secretary that stood just inside an adjoining room and, taking a well-filled purse therefrom, handed it to the young man.

"Here, I want you to take this," she said, "from what has happened to you since I have known you, I fear you cannot be full-handed. Even if you were, it would not be right for you to bear all the burden of this trip. There, now, not a word!" and smiling and bowing, she went back to her husband's bedside whence Ezra could not follow her, in order to return the pocketbook, had he been disposed to do so.

It **was** true that he was not full-handed. The loss of his printing office, the evil effects of the boycott and other things had entirely disposed of his small capital. But he said to himself that he had never yet become an object of charity. He might have refused the proffered help had he been permitted to do so, but as it was, like a sensible man, he put the money into his pocket and started out upon his quest after the missing Aimee.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE day following the incidents described in the last chapter was devoted by Ezra to a thorough investigation of all sources of information in the state capital concerning the whereabouts of the missing girl. She had many acquaintances in the city, some of whom were her school friends, and others had been frequent visitors at Quarrytown. Though Mr. Howe called upon many, and, in a quiet way made searching inquiries, not wishing to make the object of his errand a matter of too much publicity, yet no one had seen or heard anything concerning the runaway. Having satisfied himself fully that she was not in the city and had not been there, Mr. Howe purchased a ticket for Herkimer, New York. After a tedious journey he arrived at the quaint little city and found on immediate inquiry, that Samuel Carter, the husband of Mrs. Leonard's sister, lived across the Erie canal and the Mohawk river but a short distance away. It was early morning and the young man hastily betook himself in the direction indicated. As he drew near the stately farm house to which he had been directed, his imagination made delightful pictures of the lost one, and he hoped soon to be greeted by the pleasant face of her whom he sought. In this he was doomed to disappointment. Mrs. Carter, after she had found out the nature of his visit, and whence he came, treated the young lover with great courtesy, but denied, again and again, with such earnestness as to leave no doubt of its truth, any knowledge whatever of the missing girl. There was no use in

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remaining there any longer, so the afternoon train for the west found the young man a passenger thereon. Back through the Hoosier capital he came, but tarried not there. Still farther west he went, and stopped at the little city of Charleston, Illinois. He found upon inquiry, that John and James Aimee lived eight or ten miles toward the south, on the open prairie. Securing a horse and buggy he drove out to the Aimee farms and made the same request for any knowledge of the lost one that he had made elsewhere. They were greatly surprised and very much grieved at the intelligence he brought them of Aimee's having run away and declared she was not there.

The young man was becoming disheartened. He was preyed upon by the fear that he might never see her again. Where should he go next, was the question. What about Mrs. Leonard's brother at South Bend? Should he go to him, or would it be any use to do so? Perhaps it would be a better plan for him to go straight to Iowa, and visit the Mother Superior. But then, he had not been informed by Mrs. Leonard that Aimee had ever seen that sister. She would hardly go to an entire stranger, though that stranger might be a relative. Really, he was morally certain that the runaway had not gone to either South Bend or Iowa. Would it not be better for him to go back to Indiana, and look and watch for her at the capital? Surely, she would not go so far from home but that she could see the daily papers, and if she did she would doubtless see some mention made of her father's severe illness, and would she not come home then?

After some hesitation, however, he decided, as a kind of venture to be performed through a sense of duty rather than with any expectation of success, to go to the University of Notre Dame, and there call

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upon the Rev. Father Francis Aimee, and make inquiries of him. So he started back east once more and in a few hours arrived in South Bend.

The searcher stopped neither to eat nor drink, so great was his anxiety to find some trace of his lost sweetheart. He felt he must find her and that right away. He was soon directed toward the northern suburb of the city, and the extensive pile of buildings that constitute the University of Notre Dame presented themselves to view.

Mr. Howe was met at the doorway of the central building by an usher, who asked:

"Pray, in what can I direct you, sir?"

"I am looking for Father Francis Aimee," said the young man. "Can you direct me to where I shall be able to find him?"

"Certainly, certainly!" was the answer.

The usher led the way and Ezra followed, up a wide stairway at the lower end of the hall to the second story, thence into an elegantly furnished office or reception room, and bowing him into a sumptuously upholstered chair, left him sitting there while he disappeared through a side door of the apartment. Mr. Howe sat and stared at his surroundings for five minutes. He noticed upon the walls of the room many fine paintings in oil. One, as you may surmise, was a portrait of Pope Leo XIII. There were a number of others, doubtless pictures of prominent persons connected with the institution. The young man was thus engaged when the side door opened again and a clergyman entered.

There could be no doubt of this man's identity, because of his strong resemblance to Aimee and Mrs. Leonard. The young man arose to meet him, taking it for granted that the stranger was none else than

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Father Francis. He was a gentle-faced man, one whose features might inspire confidence anywhere.

"Whom have I the pleasure of meeting?" he inquired, giving Ezra his hand. The latter quickly introduced himself, and was proceeding to tell whence he had come, and what was his mission.

"Oh, I begin to suspect your errand," interrupted the reverend gentleman. "So you came from Quarrytown did you? Pray, be seated, and tell me about my sister and her family down there."

Ezra told him everything he knew or could think of. The priest's manner was so kindly, and he was such a good listener, that the young man kept on until he had exhausted his full stock of facts. He told the good man about himself, about the mob, and Aimee's belief as to who was the author of it, and why she ran away. Then he wound up with an account of Dr. Leonard and his present dangerous illness.

"Ah, the old doctor is dangerously ill, is he? I am very much afraid that the old man has allowed his pride to ruin himself, and, possibly, his daughter's happiness as well."

The lover noticed one peculiarity about Father Francis in that he had done, up to this time, very little talking himself. Mr. Howe hinted again and again. He told the priest Mrs. Leonard had thought that possibly Aimee had come to him. He suggested that it was his own idea, that she had. Therefore, he had come to him, to make inquiry. There was no answer. At last, there was no other alternative, so Ezra leveled the question full at the priest, and asked him if his niece had been to see him. The priest parried the question, and then inquired more deeply into the doctor's condition, and the prospect

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of the doctor's immediate recovery, and what was the state of the old man's mind toward Mr. Howe when he had taken sick. Father Francis was anxious, it would seem, to know that Dr. Leonard was completely eliminated from the case before he would take a hand. Then once more he entered upon an inquiry concerning the young man's surroundings and his early habits and condition. He was especially particular to ascertain his church associations, and whether he was a man of conscientious life. He seemed pleased when he found out that he was a Presbyterian in good and regular standing. Doubtless, the good father would have been better satisfied had the young man been a pious Catholic, but he seemed to prefer to have him a Presbyterian if he were not a Catholic. Ezra couldn't understand why the priest was so particular in quizzing him respecting his life and his attainments. Possibly he wanted to know what kind of a man was to become the future husband of his beloved niece. The answers to the questions seemed to give the necessary assurance. The priest appeared willing to recommend the young man in the highest degree. But why didn't he reply to the question previously put him respecting the whereabouts of the missing one if he knew anything? If he didn't know anything why didn't he say so, and thus relieve the anxious lover of his strain? Ezra began to fidget in his chair. Instead of answering any question or of imparting any information whatever, Father Francis deliberately took out his watch as if time were no object to him or anybody else, and coolly and meditatively said:

"Well, we can catch the half past four train for Chicago!"

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"The half past four train for Chicago?" queried young Howe.

"Yes; the half past four o'clock train for Chicago," answered the priest

"Why that train for Chicago?" again asked Ezra.

"Why, I am going with you to find my niece!" was the answer, and the good father smiled in the most confident and reassuring manner. "I need a little outing, anyway, and I will just go along with you. You seem to be a very proper young man, and I will just take a little jaunt up and down a state or two with you. Do you think, my dear sir, that my company will be agreeable?"

"Indeed, it will," said Ezra, having already acquired great confidence in the ability and shrewdness of the priest. "But have you the faintest idea where we ought to go in order to find her?" Ezra was determined to have his question answered.

"Young man, just trust me for that. I ought to have been a great detective instead of a humble little priest. I have such a happy faculty for picking up lost people!" There was something so good-humored, so genial indeed, so sweet and winsome in the priest's manner that Ezra felt one hundred per cent better. "There's a man one can trust," he remarked to himself.

"Now, you sit there and wait a few moments, until I get a leave of absence and change my clothes to those of an ordinary American citizen—a title I enjoy fully as much as priest—and then away we will go!"

Ezra sat in his chair about fifteen minutes, perhaps, before Father Francis returned. When he did so, he had discarded his robes, and was dressed in a neat-fitting suit of citizen's clothes; he wore on his

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head an ordinary black felt hat, and carried a small grip.

"I think after we have found the young miss," he said, as if it were a foregone conclusion that she would be found, "that I shall go down to Quarrytown with you and her," here he smiled naively, "and visit my sister a few weeks and help nurse the old doctor back to health, and, I hope, to a better temper. I have had a regular hospital training, with the rest of my education, and am a graduate in medicine as well."

"He may be dead by this time," ventured the young man.

"Oh, I think not," confidently asserted the priest, "a refreshing slumber, such as you have described, is, in cases like his, a sure sign of convalescence, and whenever a pronounced sign of convalescence appears, the physician counts certainly upon recovery." Mr. Howe was beginning to be surprised at the great learning as well as the excellent common sense of this man. He was the sort of person to secure and hold the confidence of those around him, was Howe's mental reflection. But by this time they had arrived at the depot.

"I don't believe you have slept two hours in a week," said the priest. "You look decidedly hollow-eyed and exhausted. You are certainly in no condition to present yourself to my handsome niece, even should we be fortunate enough to find her. I am going to get a sleeper for you, and put you inside of it for the next twelve hours. If we get to some place where we ought to land, before you wake, I will just have the car side-tracked, and let you tussle it out with old Morpheus until you can recover the rest you have lost."

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The cheerful, reassuring manner of the good man put the young lover at ease. He was completely relieved of the anxiety that had pressed so heavily upon him after he received Katie's disquieting letter. Since he came to think of it, he was tired and sleepy. He **did** believe he would enjoy a night's rest first rate. As for Aimee, he was quite sure now that the good priest would bring success to their venture somehow, though just how he could not at that time fully see. After they had partaken of a comfortable supper in the dining car, Ezra permitted himself to be tucked into a berth, and was soon sleeping at the rate of fifty miles an hour.

The light of another day was stealing into his little car window, when he was awakened by Father Francis calling him.

"You may now rise; I believe you have slept quite long enough," Father Francis said, parting the curtains, and looking in. I believe we are only a few miles from the place where we ought to get off and look around a little!"

Ezra dressed himself quickly, washed at the little basin in the car, and took a seat with his traveling companion, whom he found reading a book in Latin. The rapidly moving train soon whistled down brakes and came to a standstill in front of a little depot. The youth was soon hustled out of the car by his friend. In front of the depot, he read in large gilt letters the words: "Waivelet, Iowa."

"Are we actually in Iowa, Father Francis?" he inquired with some surprise.

"Indeed, we are. Do you see that large sheet of water glinting in the sun, yonder?"

Mr. Howe nodded assent.

"That is the Des Moines River."

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They stopped until after breakfast at the little village inn. Then Father Francis hailed a carriage.

"Do you know where the convent of St. Eustacia is?" he asked the driver as they stepped into the carriage.

"Sure, an' Oi do" replied the cabby.

"Drive us there," was the instruction given.

They were soon whirling along a broad, white graveled roadway. In the distance could be seen a number of red brick buildings, with green shutters, surrounded by extensive and well-kept grounds. These grounds were, in turn, surrounded by a high white-washed plank fence. There was a driveway leading from the highway to the front of the main red brick building. The entrance into the grounds was barred by a large picket gate. By the side of this gate, there stood a lodge, with a window looking out upon the highway. Peering out from this window, was the gate-keeper, complacently smoking a pipe. He responded readily to the name of Mike. He seemed to know Father Francis quite well; for he ran out of the lodge and opened the gate to let the carriage pass through. Then he took off his hat and shouted:

"The top o' the mornin' till yees, Father Francis! Oi'm right glad to see yees! Whin did yees come to Waivelet?"

"Just arrived, Mike, just arrived!" and he smilingly gave the lodge keeper his hand as the carriage passed on.

At the main door of the convent, for such it was, the carriage was dismissed, and the priest and lover went up the steps and rang the bell. A girl opened the door, and recognizing the priest at once, welcomed the men into a waiting room, with every sign of gladness in her face and tones.

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"Can I see Mother Cecilia?" inquired the priest.

"I will call her, good Father," was the answer, and she left the room. Soon there was a quick step on the stairway as of someone in haste to meet a friend, and a handsome lady of perhaps forty-five years came into the room. She, likewise, might have been known by her resemblance to Mrs. Leonard and her daughter.

"How are you, Annie?" Father Francis said as he took his sister's hand.

The woman was equally delighted to see the priest, who introduced Howe to his sister, with a short explanation of who he was and a statement of the object of his mission. Then a few moments later, as the priest spoke aside to the Mother Superior, Howe heard him ask the question, "Where is Aimee?" But the Mother Superior's answer he could not catch. Then brother and sister left the room, bidding the young man await their return.

It was five minutes after their departure before anything unusual happened. Then the knob on the side door became fidgety. So did Ezra. It turned a small distance, as if there were someone about to enter the room but hesitated on the threshold. The young man watched the knob with breathless attention. It turned around as far as it could go! Then the door which swung in toward where he was sitting, began to open. Then it stopped and closed again, and the knob went back to its former position. "Confound that door!" Ezra said under his breath. If it hadn't been on the inside of a convent designed especially for young women, he would have gone on an exploring expedition.

Then the door knob became fidgety again. The lover was on the alert, with more eagerness than be-

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fore. The knob turned once more, and the door opened toward Mr. Howe. With a spring like a tiger, Howe cleared the space between himself and the door that he had been execrating, and took his sweetheart in his arms.

There was a joyous meeting between the lovers! Their conversation, however, cannot be given, for type is too cold and formal. The old misunderstandings were removed and Ezra assured the dear girl that her father's actions in no wise had caused him to think less of her and never had, never would! The sunlight of a perfect confidence shone down upon them!

The aunt and uncle returned, by and by, and found their niece and her lover in perfect bliss. Indeed, the moments were winged, so quickly did they fly, and, moreover, the wings were tinged with the iridescent hues of the rainbow!

"I know of but one remedy for a disease like this," said Father Francis, with severity in his tones, but with a sly twinkle in his eye, "I prescribe the remedy known as matrimony. It's a sure cure, though I sincerely hope it may not have the reactionary effect in this case it sometimes has. I refer to the votaries of the divorce courts. I am opposed to the whole divorce business from beginning to end." Then after a moment's pause, the good man continued:

"I am quite sure that Dr. Leonard's repentance is genuine," he said as he looked down at the floor as if debating the adoption of some drastic policy, "But then I haven't very much faith in so-called death-bed repentances. A man gets sick and thinks he is going to die. Then he will promise a great many things, that he will refuse to carry out when he gets well. You remember the old saying:

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"The Devil were sic!
The Devil a monk would be;
The Devil were well,
The Devil a monk were he!"

"Now, with all due respect to my brother-in-law, the doctor, I want to see this happy couple married before we start back to Indiana. The old man, if his repentance is genuine, will certainly remember that he has put these unfortunate young folks to great trouble and annoyance, and will forgive us, I am sure, if we refuse to trust him further. If his repentance is not genuine, even Dr. Leonard may not be permitted to come between a man and his wife in this enlightened land."

"But," said the sister, "whom shall we get to marry them? Our little German priest in this parish would be sure to demand of them that they bring up their children as Catholics. Such a promise as that would be impossible to such ardent Presbyterians, I am sure." The good Mother Superior smiled in a way that made Ezra think there was a set-up job somewhere, and that he was one of the victims of it, but, like Barkis, he "was willin'."

"Why, my dear sister, your remark does me little credit!" replied Father Francis, with an injured expression in his face; "have you forgotten that I am a duly ordained priest of our Holy Church, and fully qualified to solemnize marriages?"

"Oh, sure enough!" quickly responded the sister, "Why, how appropriate! They shall be married right here, and by you, too!"

"No; that doesn't suit me, either. It is just as much incumbent upon me to exact the promise from them that they will raise their children in the church as it is upon your parish priest. Haven't you a Presbyterian clergyman in the village?"

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"Certainly; there is the Rev. Mr. Cummings. I don't know him very well, poor fellow; he seems to think that our people and his are mortal enemies. So, like the Jews and the Samaritans, we 'have no dealings with each other,' religiously speaking."

"Well," said the good father, with a merry smile upon his noble features, "I don't know of a better time than this in which to begin to break down the wall of prejudice. I'll run down to the county seat, and get the license, and this afternoon, we'll call upon the Rev. Fath—, I mean the Rev. Mr. Cummings *en masse*, and if he can recover his breath sufficiently, have him perform the ceremony." The little party laughed heartily at such an amusing spectacle as the little preacher would present. They were in such a jolly mood, anyway, that it was really no trouble to laugh at anything!

That afternoon, while the Rev. Mr. Cummings was preparing his Sunday morning sermon on "The Importance of the Unity of all Protestant Denominations, Along Evangelistic Lines," he was surprised to see the convent carriage drive up in front of the little parsonage door, and the stately Mother Superior, whose face he well knew, and a gentleman whose exterior showed him to be of the priestly caste, and a very handsome young man and woman, alight therefrom. Actually, they were coming into his library room! Did you ever? When they did come in, they really talked and acted like ordinary white folks! In fact, their manners were up to the very highest standard of white folks!

After most cordial introductions and hand shakings had been indulged in all around, Father Francis, in his cheery and affable manner, broached the object of their visit.

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"Brother, **this** lady, whom you have, doubtless, seen before, is my sister, and **this** one is my niece. The young man and my niece are Presbyterians, and, **not** Catholics, I am sorry to say."—here the good man broke into a smile so genial, so good-spirited, that the clergyman actually smiled in return, and said:

"I am sorry, indeed, sir, sorry!" and never once thought of what he was saying!

"Well, they want to get married!" Father Francis went on to say, waiting, apparently, to see if the embarrassed little preacher would recover from the effects of such a powerful sentence, and then he continued: "and we have come to you, a clergyman of their own church, that you may perform the ceremony!"

So the little preacher married them there in his happiest mood, and the next Sunday he preached a sermon wherein he urged the union upon evangelistic lines, of **all** Christians!

The End.

